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By J. N. Larned

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A STUDY OF GREATNESS IN MEN

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BY

J. N. LARNED

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TO MY FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES OF
THE THURSDAY CLUB, OF BUFFALO, N. Y.,
ON WHOSE INVITATION AND UNDER WHOSE
AUSPICES THE LECTURES NOW SOMEWHAT
EXPANDED IN PRINT WERE PREPARED AND
GIVEN, IN 1906, FIRST AS A PUBLIC COURSE
AND THEN REPEATED IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS
OF THE CITY, THIS VOLUME, CONTAINING
THEM, IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

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I

WHAT GOES INTO THE MAKING OF A GREAT MAN?

A STUDY OF GREATNESS IN MEN

I

WHAT GOES INTO THE MAKING OF A GREAT MAN?

THERE is no other writer who charms and irritates, stimulates and disappoints me so often and so equally as Carlyle, in what he has written personally of men. Nobody has ever glorified the human spirit by loftier conceptions of God-likeness in it than his. He held with Saint Chrysostom, that "the true Shekinah, or visible revelation of God, is Man." He felt, as Novalis expressed his feeling, that "there is but one Temple in the Universe, and that is the body of man." "We," he exclaimed, "are the miracle of miracles — the great inscrutable mystery of God." An overpowering, awe-stricken recognition of sacredness in the Being of Man is manifest in all his contemplation of it, whenever he can abstract the thought; and it was this very sublimity of his conception of

Carlyle's "Hero-Worship."

Man, as God would have him to be, and as God empowered him to be, that kindled the ceaseless wrath and scorn which flamed out of Carlyle against all defacements and debasements of the sanctified ideal in his mind. There is something overpowering in the fierceness of his contempt for the falsities, the meannesses, the quackeries, the fripperies, the veneerings, the mammon-worshipings, the servilities and cowardices that honeycomb so much of human character and make so much of human life a sham. In all literature I find no other such tonic for honesty, for sincerity, for simple downrightness and uprightness of doing, thinking, feeling, and being. There is a wonderful eloquence in the very epithets and expletives into which he packs his anger and his scorn.

In all this Carlyle is great, — unapproachable, — the mighty prophet of a religion of sincerity which needs, almost more than any other, to be preached in the world. In this he gives me nothing but wholesome stimulation and delight. The things that discontent me in his writings are these two: first, a looseness of definition in his mind for the very qualities in human character that are at the

bottom of his ideals; which leads, secondarily, to much serious inconsistency in his estimates of individual men. In other words, I cannot reconcile his normal conception of man with many of the historic characters that he chooses for the exemplification of it, because he seems to entertain a most undefined notion of some qualities that are fundamental in his conception, and to ascribe those qualities upon grounds which I am not able to understand.

In his lectures on "Hero-Worship," — which signified, in his use of the expression, a transcendent admiration and deference due to great men from their fellows, — Carlyle says, again and again, that "sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic"; that "hero" is to be "taken to mean genuine"; that "it is incredible" a great man "should have been other than true." "All the great men I ever heard of," he declares, "have this [sincerity] as the primary material of them." Now that, if we understand it correctly, is a very great truth; a truth of transcendent importance and vitality; and Carlyle did immeasurable service to the world in proclaiming it, from the beginning to the end of his

life, with iteration and reiteration, and with all the power of the great eloquence at his command. But the ideas attached to those almost synonymous words *sincerity* and *genuineness* are not ideas that stand well alone in our minds. They are connected necessarily with ideas of something behind them, to which they refer. If we think of a man as being sincere, we are thinking of something in his motives of action which we recognize as being in reality what it appears or is professed to be; and our *valuation* of his sincerity, in forming our general judgment and estimate of the man, must depend on our valuation of that which we find him to be sincere in. He may be very sincere in some kind of selfishness, or of egotism, or of ambition, as well as in some prejudice or ill-judgment, that blinds him to its quality, and this may have the effect of making him more questionable in character than if he had no sincerity or genuineness at all. In Carlyle's thinking there seems to be no adequate reckoning of this fact. It is imaginative, picturesque thinking, — not logical, but graphic, — reasoning by simile and illustration, — and the eloquent sweep of it often carries a reader, as it has carried the writer,

like organ music, to an impressive climax of emotion, but to no substantial conclusion of thought.

There is a striking example of this in the hero-lecture on Mahomet, where he calls upon Nature to show us *her* marking of what is genuine, what is true, from what is false. "You take wheat," he says, "to cast into the earth's bosom: your wheat may be mixed with chaff, chopped straw, barn-sweepings, dust and all imaginable rubbish; no matter: you cast it into the kind, just earth; she grows the wheat, — the whole rubbish she silently absorbs, shrouds *it* in, says nothing of the rubbish. The yellow wheat is growing there; the good earth is silent about all the rest, — has silently turned all the rest to some benefit, too, and makes no complaint about it. So everywhere in Nature! She is true and not a lie; and yet so great, and just, and motherly in her truth. She requires of a thing only that it *be* genuine of heart; she will protect it if so; will not, if not so." How impressive a deep meaning there seems to be in this charming picture of the just dealing of the kindly earth with a careless sower's mixture of rubbish and wheat. But when we scrutinize

it, where is the meaning that Carlyle must have intended to convey? What Nature-mark of genuineness has the earth put upon the wheat? The wheat is but genuine *in its kind*, and no more so than the rubbish, in its kind, is genuine, and the earth has dealt with each according to its kind. If tares are in the mixture she will protect *them* and give them growth, as she does the wheat, and there will be the same truth or *sincerity* in the one growth as in the other; but we shall value them respectively according to their fruit.

Carlyle's "Berserker" Admirations.

It is just here that Carlyle's teachings, uplifting and inspiring as the doctrine and the spirit of them are, seem to drift often to confusions that weaken the great influence they ought to have. The bottom differences of character and motive which actuate and modulate all that is veritable or sincere in the disposition of men are not discriminated as they need to be. In the graphic method of his thought there is a looseness of texture which gives too free a play to partialities and prejudices in himself, and they mislead his judgment many times. It was in his nature to admire a dominating, masterful temper in men, and to ad-

mire it so excessively that he could not do justice to other forms of human force. He found it easier to see evidences of a sincere and great spirit in that autocratic and dogmatic disposition to command, than to see them in any less egoistic display. He could not speak of Hampden or Washington without disparagement; but he fairly compelled himself, though with undisguised repugnance, to discover enough glimpses of what he could take to be sincerity in Napoleon for warranting the award of a pedestal in his gallery of heroes to that most masterful bully of modern times. He describes Cromwell as a "great savage Baresark," and declares in the same breath: "I plead guilty to valuing such a man beyond all other sorts of men." It is fair to infer that the baresark fighting temper in the great Puritan captain is what drew his admiration first and most; and this leaning of his likings toward a rough, dictatorial energy of spirit and action appears everywhere in his discussion of men. So far he joins himself to the very mobs of mankind, — to those mobs whose senselessness was the perennial object of his scorn. *They* adore the baresarkers, the hard fighters, the conquerors, the dictators,

"beyond all other sorts of men." It is the primitive hero-worship in mankind, natural now only to the barbaric taints that linger in our civilization, and that vulgarize such part of all society as deserves to be called "the mob." It is a partiality that resists reason, culture, Christianity; for the rank roots of it are in the paganism and the ignorance of the darkest ages of the world. That Carlyle should give way to it, and lend his powerful eloquence to the encouragement of it, is a lamentable thing. It gravely vitiates the influence of the grand doctrine of greatness in human character which he preached as it was never preached by another man.

I bring his teachings into discussion here, at the outset of my offering of some thoughts on the subject of great men, because he *is*, on this subject, the unapproachable master, — the inspired preacher, — the prophet. I come to it as his disciple, though not an unquestioning disciple. I wish to build some discourse on what is fundamental in his doctrines, in order to appeal against the aberrations of temper which sometimes, in his application of those doctrines, led his judgment astray.

It was Carlyle's contention that the world

is losing, or has lost, its due appreciation of great men; has ceased to yield them due tribute of veneration, due submission to their rightful lead and guidance, and does even, as he declared, "deny the desirableness of great men." I hold the accusation to be untrue. The finest trait I can see in human nature — so fine that it often surprises me — is that shown in the generous spirit with which men, almost universally, admire and honor and defer to the fortunate few who are raised to a shining eminence among their fellows by surpassing endowments of mind. As a rule, there is no grudging of a manly homage from the lower to the higher ranks in that gradation of minds and souls which Nature has arranged. Nor is there any fawning or self-seeking in it, since the poet, the artist, the savant, receive it as freely as the powerful masters of state. To me it seems to be just a glad and grateful welcome of teaching and leading, with a generous pride in the knowledge that human faculties and forces can be raised to so noble a pitch.

I see no lack, in measure or kind, of such homage as it is good for humanity to render to its great men. What I do see is a need of standards for gauging altitudes in character

and forces in genius, so far, at the least, as to distinguish what is only surprising or imposing from what is really great. The difference here is vast, going to the very bottom of the good we can get from the gift of great men. That good is in the reverence of spirit, the loving admiration and the trust wherewith we can open heart and mind in ourselves to the influence, the example, the leading, of characters that are august in their superiority to our own. We miss it if our impressions from what is merely extraordinary in faculty and achievement are confused with our feeling for what is great. Qualities and powers that have little or nothing of a transcendent superiority in their nature may be of such marvelous effectiveness, in the work or the strifes of the world, that men are lifted by them to what seem to be the topmost heights of historical immortality. Often, too, it happens that great and mean attributes, the admirable and the contemptible, are so mixed in the constitution of a man of power that we cannot do homage to him in the higher view without a blinding of ourselves to the lower which does us grave moral harm.

Possible Standards of Human Quality.

In some instances, that neutralization of

exalting powers in a man by countervailing meannesses has been appreciated with singular justice by the public opinion of the world. For example, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, was unquestionably the ablest soldier (Cromwell excepted, perhaps) that England or Great Britain has ever produced, and his victories, checking the aggressive career of France under Louis XIV, were the most brilliant ever won by British arms; but the utter baseness of the man was more than even military glory could gild, and he remains a more inconspicuous figure in history than any other warrior of his very high quality that I can call to mind.

For another example I may point to the second of the Cæsars, Octavius, called Augustus, whose rank in history would assuredly be much higher than it is if there had not been traits in his character which are specially offensive to the better part of mankind. He was the architect of the Roman Empire, for the building of which Julius Cæsar had but cleared the ground. His work was a masterpiece of shrewdness, prudence, patience, and political skill. In its proof of extraordinary abilities it may not be entirely comparable with the more ver-

satile performances of Julius Cæsar, as politician and soldier; but, if faults of character in the two men could be judged with equal charity by the world, I doubt if Julius Cæsar and Augustus Cæsar would stand far apart in fame and esteem. Julius was a man of many vices, few scruples, few virtues of a positive kind; but the manner of his sinning was so open, so frank, and he carried himself through it so gallantly, that it has seemed, in common views, to be half rectified by the manliness of his air. He was equally capable of a high magnanimity or a merciless cruelty, according to their bearing on the objects he pursued. In a word, his nature was impressively large in scale, morally and immorally, as well as intellectually and energetically; too large for meanness, trickishness, or anything that can be despised. Augustus, on the other hand, was a man of furtive ways, stealthy movements, hidden aims; a cold-brained schemer, of marvelous sagacity and ingenuity, but trickish and considerably despicable in the very ingeniousness with which he picked and pocketed, out of the wreckage of the old republic, those broken bits of constitutional authority that went into his remarkable patchwork of imperial power. He has

suffered, accordingly, in historical estimation, much more than he would have suffered from detestable crimes committed boldly, in an open way. So impossible does it seem to be to associate impressions of greatness and of meanness with the same man. Wickedness and greatness appear to be far more compatible ideas.

Rational Principles of Judgment.

When I spoke just now of standards for gauging character and genius I used a word that means more in strictness than was in my thought. We are dealing here with quantities and qualities which no metric system will apply to, and gauges and standards, in the precise sense, are out of the question. But I am persuaded that it is possible to formulate some definite principles of judgment that will test the superiority in men of fame reasonably, affording a tenable ground for some satisfying classification and comparison among the "heroes" of mankind. Especially, I think it practicable and most important to draw some lines of principle for the distinction which ought to be preserved between men who are no more than extraordinary and men who are essentially great. The simplest psychology we can employ — the sim-

plest analysis we can make of the factors of character and power in man — will lead us to the fundamental distinctions we need. Those factors lie wholly in three groups, namely: —

The Ethical, or Moral;

The Rational, or purely Intellectual;

The Dynamic, or Energetic.

The first of these groups takes in all that gives a moral quality to character and conduct in men; the second includes reason and imagination, with whatever acts in the mind toward the operation of both; in the third we place such forces of feeling and volition as energize human action, by ardors and enthusiasms, by passions and desires, by resolution and will.

Now, the factors in the moral and intellectual groups belong distinctively to the *human* constitution, while those of the energizing group do not; and this most significant and important difference is seldom taken into account, as it needs to be. In his moral being Man shares absolutely nothing with the beasts; in the intellectual he shares a very little; but in the neural heats and tempers which energize his active life he shares much with the lower animal world. When he thinks, when

he forms plans of action, when he obeys or consciously disobeys any ethical rule of life, he is simply and only human; but when feeling comes into play, and forces are moved in him which make him bold or timid, resolute or hesitating, hot or cold in temperament, tense or lax in effort, according to their interaction and their strength, then he is the man-animal, exploiting his double nature, and actuated largely from the carnal side. Obviously, therefore, the elements of power and of character that come from this source, of mixed animality and mind, are lower in essential nobility than those which originate purely in the intellect and the moral sense. Indeed, we may say that they have no character and no worth of their own, but derive their whole importance in human nature from the moral dispositions and intellectual faculties that they serve. If not aimed by his reason, inspired by his imagination, motived by his conscience, wherein do the energies of a strong man differ from the energies in a beast of prey?

Plainly, then, the essential factors in character, which cannot be rated low in a right conception of greatness among men, are the moral and the intellectual, and the factors of

energy have importance only as servants of these, appointed to give them activity and strength. The conception of a perfected man demands not only the inclusion of them all, but demands that the ethical motives shall be dominant in his life. This is not theory; it is a fact to which the judgment and experience of the leading races of mankind have been testifying for nineteen centuries, at the least. For us, who dwell in Christendom, there is one ideal of perfection in human character, realized in Jesus the Nazarene, which most of us accept. Whether we look upon Jesus as a purely human figure, or see God incarnate in His person, we are generally of one mind in acknowledging that the conceivable man without blemish is represented uniquely in His life. If we accept Him as the type of a perfected humanity, we can entertain no ideal of human greatness which mutilates that type. This does not imply an excessive rating of moral attributes, for those attributes in Jesus were only proportioned to others as I am arguing that they ought to be in every man of acknowledged greatness. By habit of thought we associate Him so exclusively with emotions of

The Ideal of a Perfected Man.

religion and ideas of moral purity that we are apt to lose sight of His perfections in every other attribute of mind. Jesus exhibits to us, not merely the celestial spirit and the transcendent purity which have seemed to be divine, but he shows us every endowment of humanity at its best. If his parables and discourses had come to us with no mark of ascribed divinity on their authorship, I am sure we should have given them the highest of all places in the precious literature of the world. What other poet has joined imagination to reason in forms so perfect, with effects so simple, so powerful, so beautiful, to ends so exalted, as Jesus, in the parables by which He taught? From what other philosophy of life has mankind received so much light, so much leading, so much help, as from these parables, and from the sayings of the Master, and from His answers to the questioning of followers and foes? What other words that letters have preserved for us are so pregnant and so compact with meaning, yet so simple in the utterance, so straight to their purpose, so entirely without waste? It is only a slight record that we have, of a few passages in the brief life of the great teacher, — notes of what fell on a

few occasions from His lips, — repeated in four forms, with little variations, and possibly all from one source. If we throw these four gospel reports into one, canceling the repetitions, we may have all that we know of the talk of Jesus in a little printed pamphlet, so small that an eloquent preacher of the present day would almost fill its pages with his Sunday discourse. What a wonderful bit of literature it is! Not as revelation, but as literature, there is nothing else so small in the mountain-heaps of our books that holds nearly so much; nothing else so unerring in thought, so pure in feeling, so rich in imagination, so perfect in the beauty of simple speech. Intellectually, then, as well as morally, our ideal of a perfected humanity is fulfilled in Jesus. Nor was He less complete on that side of his human nature which gave its dauntless energy to the great mission he performed. Calmly, patiently, with no faltering, no fear, no passion, he went straight on to the end of what he had to do, exampling the perfection of energy, the perfection of courage, the perfection of will.

I say, then, that our ideal man, who cannot be otherwise than our ideally Great Man, is surpassingly endowed in all ways, but ruled

from the sovereign seat of moral motives in the whole exercise of his powers; and the just measure of actual greatness in all men of exalted fame is by the nearness of their approach to that ideal.

Unhappily, this Christian standard of human superiority is rejected by what seems to be a vast majority of mankind; and it is the sin of Carlyle that he has stimulated its preference for the rude animalities of force and weight in character, over the finer energies and gravities of spirit and mind that make less commotion in history, but are more profoundly felt. If the world at large should be asked for a ballot to name the greatest man of all time, I am afraid that the Corsican warrior who scourged Europe in the last century would head the poll. Hereafter I purpose to examine that astonishing character and career, which have so fascinated and deluded mankind, and to question whether we can count Napoleon Bonaparte among the great of mankind without offering an indignity to the human race.

If it is true, as I claim, that extraordinary endowments cannot impart greatness to men when the quality of greatness is not in the endowments themselves, it is equally true that great

deeds do not signify greatness in the doers of them, unless they are the product of great qualities or powers. Very often they are not so. Uncontrollable circumstances do sometimes give small results to great endeavors, and sometimes bring stupendous effects out of things done with little genius and moderate energy of will. A deed thus exalted by its consequences does not necessarily entitle the doer to that homage we owe and delight in paying to the master-spirits of the race. We need not begrudge to him his fortunate fame — the glory of his association with the great event — if we do not allow it to confuse our notion of great men. It is right that he should be memorable and honored for what he did; but much more it is right that we should keep a distinction in our esteem between the man of a great deed and the intrinsically great man. It pleases us often to construct lists of "the greatest men of all time," — the hundred greatest or the fifty greatest, — and we like to debate over them and dispute about them; but I never see such a list without noting this confused valuation of men by the value of events which they brought about.

Men not Measurable by their Deeds.

For example: There is now no doubt that the obscure Norwegian known as Eric the Red sailed westward from Iceland, in the tenth century, and found Greenland, and that Leif, his son, sailed still farther into the western ocean and found America. But the exploit of Leif Ericsson ended there. Nothing came of it; it had no consequences. Europe knew no more of America than it had known before. Five centuries later another bold voyager sailed westward from the Old World and found America, — and lo! all human history was changed. One of the transforming events in the life of mankind had occurred, and every happening to humanity since has taken some difference from it, of intention or effect. Separate the two achievements, of Columbus and of Leif, from all thought of consequences which neither Columbus nor Leif had in view, and by how much do they differ in measure or kind? Yet the one has taken on the appearance of an extraordinarily great achievement by an extraordinarily great man, and the other stands in no such light.

Let me cite another more striking example: Alexander of Macedonia, styled Alexander the Great, never fails to be named in a list of "the

greatest men." He ran a career of conquest which opened, in the history of the world, a train of influences more profound and farther reaching than any other that ever came from such a cause. Western Asia and Egypt were mastered, as a consequence, by the Greek spirit and Greek mind, and became the seat from which they acted on the subsequent world-empire of Rome as they could never have acted from their native land. They prepared the soil in which the seeds of Christianity were planted first; we can almost say that they established the conditions which made it possible for the mission of Jesus to have success. In the light which these great, everlasting results from his conquests reflect back upon him, Alexander appears, very naturally and rightly, as a famous, shining figure in history; but not necessarily as a great man. In what he did there is nothing to show greatly surpassing qualities or powers. He was the brilliantly energetic son of a father much abler than himself. With an army which his father, Philip, had created, employing a tactical system which his father had perfected, wielding the Hellenic energies which his father had mastered, he carried out an under-

taking which his father had prepared for, and overthrew a decayed empire, which seems to have been ready to fall at any vigorous touch. Seventy years before Alexander, a body of Greek mercenaries, enlisted by a rebellious Persian prince, the younger Cyrus, had been led from Asia Minor to Babylonia, and then, on the death of their employer, had made the immortal "retreat of the Ten Thousand," under Xenophon, from the lower Euphrates to the Euxine, with moderate loss. The experience of Xenophon had proved the hollowness of the show of empire which the monarch at Susa kept up, and almost guaranteed success to Alexander's attack. We need not deny that the young king of Macedonia moved his forces with admirable energy and fought his battles with an admirable skill; but we may reasonably doubt that the highest order of military genius was required for the routing of such armies as the Persians brought into the field, against Greek veterans, serried in the Greek phalanx.

In character it is certain that Alexander showed little dignity or strength. He yielded to caprices of temper and inclinations of appetite with no self-command. He was over-

come like a child or a barbarian with the intoxication of his success, and lost the level sanity which was the distinction of a cultivated Greek. Of political ability there is little sign in his brief career. All that followed the actual breaking of Persian sovereignty in the so-called Empire of Alexander was the work of his generals, who carved it in pieces and divided it among themselves. The Macedonian conqueror, in fact, was a man of brilliant gifts, who played a striking part in history, becoming the prime agent in producing a movement of events which proved to be of stupendous importance to the future of the world. Let us honor him in that view of his relation to history, without awarding him a seat in the august company of "the greatest men of all time."

In the history of mechanical invention there are not a few instances of fame so exalted that it seems to imply greatness in the winners of it, but does not yield that meaning when scrutinized closely. Inventions that we recognize as surpassingly great take their impressive proportions from the magnitude and importance of the consequences that came from them, rather than from any transcend-

ency of genius in the inventors. The most striking example I can cite is afforded by the invention of printing with movable type. Nothing done among men since they came into the world has been the cause of more prodigious effects; and so, if we try to measure him by the almost immeasurable import of his work, the father of the modern printing art, whether he be Gutenberg, or Laurens Coster, or another, must rank with the very greatest of men. That, however, is a plainly unreasonable valuation of the man; because the invention, in itself, as a mechanical exploit, could not call for the exercise of surpassingly high powers of the human mind.

Gutenberg, Columbus, Alexander of Macedon, and more whom I could name, form a class to be described, I think, as men of fortunate fame, — made greatly famous, that is, by greatly important achievements, but who are not of the peerage of the personally great, whose eminence they seem to share.

There is another class in history, somewhat kindred to this, of men fortunately born, who receive personal credit, more or less, for grandeurs that are no more, in reality, than an inherited robe. The many-crowned emperor

Charles the Fifth is one who comes readily to mind. He was born to a lofty position, and could not be less than the most conspicuous personage of an extraordinary time, at the climax of the passage of the world from its mediæval to its modern plane. The accident of birth not only gave him many crowns, and won for him the prestige of the great title of the Cæsars, but it put the wealth of the Netherlands and the rich first plunder of Mexico and Peru into his hands. He had the opportunity and the means for being one of the great master-makers of history, — and what did he do with them, except to resist with futility the new movements of human progress which he could not stop? Excepting a work of ruin in Spain and Italy and of death and misery in the Netherlands, which he left to be finished by his hateful son, what were the fruits of his life? I do not know of any that can glorify the man.

Where, then, shall we look for the final mark and measure of a really great superiority in one man over the mass of his fellow men? We cannot hope to discover it by any abstract, indefinite valuing of minds; for we have no knowledge of the human mind that will war-

rant us in attempting a comparative rating of the differing faculties and forces that make it up, any farther than along the lines of division that I have indicated, between moral, intellectual, and energetic powers. So far as we know, the varied functions of mind are equal in all that they signify, *per se*, of intellectual rank among men. In poetry and in imitative art, in science and in philosophy, in statesmanship and in war, men may be exercising gifts of intellect that would rank them in indistinguishable equality if we had a gauge and standard of brain-power to apply, — which we have not. But, instinctively, we know that such a standard would not be the true one, if we had it at command; for, instinctively, we incline always, I think, in our thoughtful estimates of remarkable men, to consider first and most the worth and dignity of the objects on which they expend their powers. This seems to be the instinctive inclination of our better judgment, though we do not obey it consistently, as we ought to do. We leave our minds too open to the fascination of astonishing exploits, whether they are worthy or unworthy of the intellect and energy employed; but I doubt if

The True Measure of a Great Superiority.

we can ever think seriously of the matter without concluding that there must be a great motive in what a man does, — a great object in the use of great powers, — a great character enfolding and embodying the great intellect or the great energy we contemplate, — to make a really great man.

More and more, in my reading of history, I am drawn to the contemplation of *character* and *motive*, as the factors to be weighed and determined in all right estimates of those who have acted important parts on the historic stage. More and more I am led to compare men of fame and measure them, one by another, on that basis of the ethical quality in themselves and the ethical purpose in what they do. Otherwise, I should be forced to yield my homage of admiration and deference to many men who have defiled their abilities in evil exploits or detestable careers. I should have to reckon Cortés among my heroes, and glorify his conquest of Mexico; for it is hard to find in history a more consummate performance of its kind. The perfection of judgment, of energy, of resoluteness, of resourcefulness, is exhibited in every emergency of the audacious undertaking. In the practi-

cal view, it is as flawless an achievement, perhaps, as Cæsar's conquest of Gaul. But with rapine for its motive, the vainglory of conquest for its object, what is its claim to anything but detestation and contempt?

Then, again, I should feel compelled to seat the inexplicable, cold-blooded Sulla quite high in the temple of my hero-worship; because nothing in the story of Rome is more wonderful to me than the manner of his taking, using, and dropping dictatorial power; but when no discernible purpose, except to defeat and destroy his opponents, is discoverable in what he did, I am absolved from the admiration I might otherwise yield.

Briefly summed, the things needful to the making of a great man, in the view I have suggested, are these three: —

(1) Great endowments, so much beyond the gifts of faculty or power to common men that they surprise our wonder and admiration, whatever their nature may be.

(2) Great opportunity for the adequate exercise and demonstration of such endowments, without which they remain undeveloped, as well as unknown. I cannot doubt that the possibilities of greatness have existed in many

men who lived in circumstances which gave no call and afforded no opening for the best and most they could do. For some kinds of noble gift this may not be true. A "mute inglorious Milton" may not be possible, since no circumstances need silence the song of a poet who is truly inspired. But a Washington, whose country had no need of the great service he could give it, may easily have lived a life of modest usefulness in some provincial circle and died, not only with no discovery of his potential greatness, but with no development of the potency itself. The call to action which he did not receive would be needed to make him great.

(3) Great motives and purposes in the use of whatever the great endowments may be, so that they be not wasted on worthless employments, or defiled by an evil use.

These, in my view, are the distinguishing conditions of all greatness in men, whatever the field may be in which their eminence is won. The few examples of life and character that I have chosen for special study in this view are wholly from one theatre of renown; and I have chosen them so, not because I would give a leading importance to that stage which

exhibits the clamorous dramas of politics and war, but because its scenes and passions are especially confusing to our judgment of the actors thereon. The critical attitude is more needful in this than in any other theatre where great parts are played. In other high employments of genius, the awards of honor that come at last from the imperial court of public opinion go naturally, almost always, to reputations which fulfill the conditions I have named. The acknowledged great poets are the poets who have exercised a surpassing idealism of mind upon subjects that are fully worthy of their powers, and to ends that make the most of their gifts. The conception of greatness in a poet whose themes are mean or trivial, and whose verse is empty of lofty thought, is a conception that our minds refuse and will not form. It is so in all realms of Art. The vaunted "art for art's sake," — art for the technique of it, — art for the mere cunning of eye and hand, — was never and will never be *great* art. The painters of pigsties for scenery and dames of fashion for human portraiture are craftsmen, whose imitative cunning is never thought to be measurable against the penetrating, idealizing, dis-

covering art which finds madonnas among women and glimpses of Eden or Olympus in the landscapes of the world. It is only on those eminences of public fame which overtop the battlefields of politics and war that the noble and the ignoble climbers seem so often to be confused indistinguishably and admired alike. Such confusion is illustrated most strikingly in the bewildered homage of admiration which Napoleon Bonaparte, the most extraordinary of all military and political adventurers, has received and is receiving from the world at large.

II

NAPOLEON: A PRODIGY, WITHOUT GREATNESS

II

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If the value of great men to their fellows ended with the ending of their work, there might be nothing but a question of justice to their memories in our estimates of those who are dead. But death does not finish their service or time extinguish their worth to mankind. Even though nothing may remain of what such a man did, — no visible fragment of product from his labors that has not been consumed or outworn in the changes of the world, — there is, or there ought to be, an imperishable survival of living influences from the man himself. If he is not in some way an inspiration to us — in some way a potent exemplar of wisdom, or noble purpose and power; if he does not set before us a standard of character that we contemplate with reverence, with aspiration, with an exaltation of our faith in human kind; if we cannot take lessons from his life that will righteously energize our own, — then, surely, there is either

some pitiful mistake in the supposition of his greatness, or else we do not know him for what he was. Such mistakes are made easily and often, and because they arise from confusions that obscure our perception and apprehension of the really great in human character, I am contending for the recognition of a few principles of judgment that may guide us to truer estimates of notable men.

Those principles of judgment have been suggested in the preceding chapter. There will now be an attempt to apply them, in a concrete way, to a few important characters and careers. Napoleon Bonaparte has been chosen for the first subject of examination, because the standing of no other exalted personage in history seems quite so questionable as his. There was never another more conspicuously a prodigy of his kind; never another whose power to master and mould events in his day was more amazing; never another less entitled to be called a great man, if there is truth in the conception of greatness which I have set forth.

Let us realize, to begin with, the historical impressiveness of this man, by a rapid review of his wonderful career: —

In race he was Italian, not French. The subjugation of his native island, Corsica, to France, had just been accomplished when Napoleon was born, in 1769. That timely escape of the young Corsican from Genoese to French citizenship carried him to a French military school for his education, placed him in the French army, and threw open before him, by the instant outbreak of the French revolution, such gates of opportunity as were never unlocked before for a genius and an ambition like his. At twenty-four, in the year 1793, he was making his mark as a soldier and drawing attention to himself by his handling of artillery at the siege which drove the British from Toulon and ended royalist resistance in southern France. In two years more he had gained a reputation which made him the champion chosen by the government of the Directory to crush an alarming Parisian revolt. By that service to the men in power he earned command of the army in Italy, and entered the field of his first astonishing campaign, which humbled Austria, tore large provinces from her empire, broke the hostile coalition of European powers, and left England alone in re-

The Rise of the Young Soldier.

sistance to the aggressions of revolutionary France.

It was then that the overbearing audacity of the man began to be displayed. Making the most of his own prestige and the weakness of the corrupt Directory, he assumed practical independence of action, exercising a free hand in dealing with his conquests, and roughly reconstructing the northern and central states of the peninsula to suit schemes of his own. He put on the airs of a potentate, hardly veiling his arrogant dictation of measures to the Directory in France. Count Miot de Melito, of the French diplomatic service in Italy, went to confer with the victorious general at the headquarters of the army near Milan, in the summer of 1797, and his memoirs[1] describe the haughty and imposing state with which the young soldier had so promptly surrounded himself. "I was received by Bonaparte," he says, "at the magnificent residence of Montebello, in the midst of a brilliant court, rather than the headquarters of an army. Strict etiquette already reigned around him; his aides-de-camp and his officers were no longer

[1] *Memoirs of Count Miot de Melito*, tr. by Mrs. C. Hoey and J. Lillie. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1881.

received at his table, and he had become fastidious in the choice of the guests whom he admitted to it. . . . He dined, so to speak, in public; the inhabitants of the country were admitted to the room in which he was eating, and allowed to gaze at him with a keen curiosity. He was in nowise embarrassed or confused by these excessive honors, but received them as though he had been accustomed to them all his life. . . . All bowed before the glory of his victories and the haughtiness of his demeanor. He was no longer the general of a triumphant republic, but a conqueror on his own account, imposing his laws on the vanquished."

Bonaparte conversed freely with the count during the latter's visit, giving very open expression to his contempt, not only for the men of the Directory, but for the French republic, and for the French people at large. "Do you imagine," said he, "that I triumph in Italy in order to aggrandize the pack of lawyers who form the Directory, and men like Carnot and Barras? What an idea! A republic of thirty million men! And with our manners, our vices! How is it possible? That is a fancy of which the French are full at present, but

it will pass away like all the others. What they want is glory and gratified vanity; but as for liberty, they do not understand what it means. Look at the army! The victories we have just won have restored the French soldier to his true character. To him I am everything. Let the Directory try to take the command from me, and they will see who is master. The nation must have a chief, and a chief rendered illustrious by glory, not by theories of government, by phrases, by theoretic speeches, which Frenchmen do not understand. Give them baubles — that suffices them; they will be amused and will let themselves be led, so long as the end toward which they are going is skillfully hidden from them."

Proceeding to discuss the then pending negotiations for peace with Austria, he said: "Peace is not to my interest. You see what I am, and what I can now do in Italy. If peace is made, if I am no longer at the head of the army, which is attached to me, I must renounce the power, the high position I have made for myself, in order to pay court to a pack of lawyers at the Luxembourg. I do not want to leave Italy unless it be to play a part in France similar to my part here, and the time has not yet

come; the pear is not ripe. . . . I am quite ready to weaken the republican party; some day I shall do it for my own advantage, not that of the former dynasty. In the mean time I must act with the republican party. And then if peace be necessary in order to satisfy our Paris boobies, and if it has to be made, it is my task to make it."

So early (in his twenty-eighth year) was the young Corsican despising his fellow men in general and Frenchmen in particular, and so distinctly were his plans of ambition and his arrogant methods in pursuing them already determined in his mind. Four months later he made peace with Austria, by the treaty of Campo Formio, substantially dictating the terms. He judged the Parisian pear to be not yet ripe for him, and he would watch it a little longer before reaching to pluck it; but his influence was already the most commanding in France, and he could plan his next military employment. He chose to lead an expedition for the conquest and occupation of Egypt, looking forward to movements from that convenient foothold against the English in India, and with other ideas of a more private ambition, as we shall see. Egypt was subjugated;

but Lord Nelson stripped all possible fruits from that success by his victory in the Battle of the Nile, which destroyed the French fleet, gave England full control of the Mediterranean, and cut Napoleon and his army off from France. Nevertheless the indomitable Corsican was able, by false bulletins and reports, to obscure his failure so far that, when, in the autumn of 1799, he made his own escape from the trap in which his army was left, he could reappear in France with a prestige not greatly impaired.

Meantime a new coalition against the republic had been formed in Europe, and the French armies had suffered serious defeats in Italy and on the Rhine. It had come to be inevitable that the rotten and incapable government of the Directory would be overthrown by some movement which some strong hand could concentrate and control, and the opportune arrival of Bonaparte brought the needed hand. Within a month his supporters had organized and executed the *coup d'état* which placed him at the head of the government, with the title of First Consul, under a constitution which put little of practical restraint on his arbitrary exercise of power. His two colleagues

in the consulate, and the bodies behind him which seemed to have legislative functions and a representative character, were mere features of stage scenery, arranged to give a republican appearance to what was, in reality, a restored monarchy with restored absolutism in France.

For a time there were good results. The executive ability of the First Consul was very great, and the free hand with which he worked enabled him to produce quick and astonishing changes, from chaotic to systematic and orderly conditions, and from depression to activity in industry and trade. At the same time he was giving fresh triumphs to the French arms and intoxicating the nation anew with military pride. Once more he was master of Italy, and refashioned its states to his liking; again he smote Austria to the earth and broke the coalition of European powers; and now he began to deal with Germany as with Italy, dictating political reconstructions and rearrangements of its numerous states. France, satisfied with the strong government which had rescued it from the anarchy of revolution, and glorying in the genius and power of its chief, was submissive to him willingly in these

early years of his rule. It gave him the First Consulate for life in 1802, and allowed him to adorn himself with imperial and royal crowns and titles in 1804 and 1805, objecting very little, so far as can be seen.

His attempted Autocracy in Europe.

It appears to be plain that a very slight curb of reasonable moderation put then upon his ambition would have made Napoleon's imperial throne secure to the end of his days. Europe would have acquiesced in his empire if he had been willing to keep it within even the widest boundaries of historical France. But nothing less than the dominion of the world could have satisfied his demoniacal lust of power; and that lust was stimulated by an inappeasable hatred of England that took possession of his mind. Her sea-power defied him. It had ruined his projects in Egypt. It upheld her against him when all other resistance was beaten down. It protected the commerce which poured wealth into her coffers, and it would enable her, again and again, to form alliances against him by subsidies and loans. He could not match it. He could not break through it with his invincible armies, to reach her island shores. He had talked and planned and seemed

to prepare for a great expedition across the Channel; but he cannot have believed that he would dare the risk. This powerlessness to strike straightly at the enemy which stood most resolutely in his path was hardly less than maddening to so arrogant a temper as his. It impassioned his natural craving for power, concentrating it on one supreme practical object, — to ruin England by controlling the larger sources of her wealth. He persuaded himself that all Europe could be forced into such submission to his purpose and such obedience to his orders that its markets might be closed to British goods, and that British industries might thereby be starved. In his obstinate pursuit of this design he lost clearness of judgment, and plunged blindly into some, at least, of the undertakings which wrecked his career.

Nevertheless, for seven years after taking his crowns and erecting his thrones in France and Italy he could believe in the superhumanity and invincibility of himself. Through that period nothing failed in what he undertook, excepting when he ventured to combine the navies of France and Spain against Nelson's fleet, and lost them at Trafalgar. He

made and unmade kingdoms at pleasure, in Italy, Holland, Germany, and Spain; seized the papal states and annexed them to France; dragged the Pope from Rome and held him in ignominious imprisonment for five years; surrounded himself in his family with kings and queens; distributed principalities and duchies among his chief officers and ministers with a lavish hand; and shattered every combination that opposed itself to the widespread despotism he was building up. Austria, for a third and a fourth time, fought him and was crushed, at Ulm and Austerlitz in 1805, at Wagram in 1809. Prussia, first cheated and humiliated as an unwilling ally, was then struck to the very dust, in absolute subjugation, by double overthrow, at Jena and Auerstadt, on the same day. Russia, intervening, was broken in courage by a great defeat at Friedland, and her Tzar, partly cowed and partly bribed, became a helper in the Napoleonic "boycotting" of British goods.

So far in the career of Napoleon his experience had been with the baser much more than with the better part of mankind. In France the weak and the cowardly had bent before him, the servile had fawned upon him,

the unscrupulous in ambition and in mercenary greed had swarmed about him, clutching at his skirts, to be lifted by him as he climbed the heights of opportunity and power. It is true that no small number of the truest and best in France assisted his rise, supported his government, even into its despotic stage, and served it with honest patriotism, because it restored to their country the conditions of authority and order which they deemed its greatest need; but it is no less true that the kind of government which Napoleon wished to exercise had to take its chief instruments and most numerous servitors from men of the baser order of brain, like Talleyrand and Fouché. At home, that was the kind of society, in his closer surroundings, with which he had most to do. Outside of France, his dealings, to the greatest extent, had been with as despicable a lot of sordid rulers and brainless bureaucrats as ever afflicted the European states. In Germany, especially, he found kings and princes as ready to be his puppets, as eager to be bribed with new titles or new territory, as empty of any patriotism, as ignorant of honorable motives, as the meanest of his servants at home. If he had not been natu-

rally contemptuous of mankind he must have learned to be so, from the manifestations that were plainest in his sight.

The Revolt of Europe.

But now Europe was turning toward him another front of character which he had not known, and which he would never comprehend. At last he had stirred those slow masses of people which give nations their ponderable substance, and which nothing can resist when they move. The flunkies and hirelings and puppets with whom he had had most of his foreign dealings hitherto were being pushed aside, and he now faced men and motives of a very different stamp.

On the surface of things, in the spring of 1811, the all-conquering Corsican appeared to be approaching the substantial autocracy in Europe to which he aspired. The humbled house of Austria had given him one of its daughters in marriage, to succeed his divorced wife, Josephine, and when, on the 20th of March, 1811, a son and heir was born to him, he exclaimed: "Now begins the finest epoch of my reign." There was never a self-delusion more infatuate and blind. The knell of doom to his false fabric of military power, and to all of his selfish projects, was beginning in that

very hour to ring loud, and he heard it not. Forces of outraged national feeling which nothing in his nature could understand were undermining him in Spain and Germany, and the crust of despotism that covered them was at the breaking point, but he knew it not.

On that day of March, 1811, when he took his newborn son into his arms and exulted in the gift of a successor to his crowns, his forces in the Spanish peninsula were recoiling from Wellington's impregnable lines at Torres Vedras, beginning retreats that would seldom halt till Wellington followed them into France; Germany, beaten, trampled upon, insulted by him, but steeled to heroism and disciplined to wisdom by the anguish of her subjugation, was undergoing a rapid unseen evolution of her real racial strength; and Russia, sickened of her profitless partnership with Napoleon in his abortive "continental system," was encouraging secret plans for a fresh rising of the nations against the insolent warrior who abused or threatened them all. He scorned the abundant warnings that came to him from his agents everywhere, who realized, as he did not, the serious menace of these underburning

The Crumbling of his Power.

fires. He thought that he had attained invincibility, and nothing could shake that belief. As he looked at the situation, Russia was the one remaining power on the continent that he needed to break, as he had broken Austria and Prussia, and he entertained no doubt of his ability to lay the Muscovite empire at his feet. And so he exhausted France by his stupendous preparations for that invasion of Russia, in 1812, which ended in the most horrible of all the military catastrophes that are told of in the history of the world.

Then, in the next year, came the mighty uprising of Germany, supported by Russia, Austria and Great Britain, and he had to face it with armies filled out by boys under twenty years of age, to the extent of 150,000 in the conscription of that year. So frightfully had the grown manhood of France been destroyed in his wars! He had so consumed the vast hosts of his trained veterans that, even though his resistless will and energy could drag well nigh half a million of armed men to the field once more, he could not make them into such forces as he had wielded in the past. He had some successes at the outset of the struggle with his oncoming

fate, winning the last of his shining victories at Dresden; and then all went disastrously to the end.

After the decisive great "battle of the nations," fought round Leipsic, in October, Napoleon cast reproaches upon Marshal Augereau, saying that he was not the Augereau of Castiglione, thus referring to a battle of 1796, in Italy, where the marshal had most distinguished himself, and from which he had received a ducal title. "Ah," retorted the veteran, "give me back the old soldiers of Italy and I will show you that I am." That reply was descriptive in part, but not wholly, of the day of retribution to which Napoleon had come. He had spent the lives of the generation of men who won his victories for him; but, likewise, he had spent the best of his own powers. All military critics of his campaigns have seen signs, from this time, of a weakened grip in his handling of the awful forces of war. It was mighty, still; amazing in the last tremendous efforts of his resistance to the approaching fate, when the allies had driven him back to France, and from the frontier toward Paris, and the circle of their armies closed round him; but his

electric perceptions, his inlighted vision of the field, his instincts of infallible quick judgment, were not as of old.

And more fatal to him than that fading of his genius was the monstrous inflation and arrogation of his will. He had fed it, exercised it, cultivated it, till it overlorded all the faculties of his mind. It would not let him see the facts of his adversity as they were; and so, of all people concerned, he was the last to comprehend the situation to which he had come. Even after Leipsic he was offered the keeping of his throne in France, with the natural boundaries of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine for his kingdom, if he would let the rest of Europe alone; and even while he defended Paris, in the battles of the last weeks of his reign, he might have kept the sovereignty of France as it was in 1791, before the wars of the Revolution broke out; but he would not give up his kingdom of Italy, nor agree to restore Holland to freedom. The demoniac despotism of his self-will drove him on to the inevitable end of his bloody career, dragging thousands of the very schoolboys of France to untimely death as heartlessly as he had dragged their fathers before.

What an unparalleled career it is! What a prodigy of awful and appalling powers it discloses in the man! But what kind of powers? From what factors in the human make up? How much from the higher and how much from the lower? How much from soul and mind, and how much from the animal nature that goes with them in man? How much of the kind of force that makes the lion the king of beasts, and how much of the attributes that put man above the beasts? These are not idle questions in the case of so exceptional a man.

Of the surpassing quality of Napoleon's intellect, in some modes of power, there is no question, of course. All that goes to the making of a mighty war-lord was concentrated in him to a degree and a perfection that, possibly, has never been equaled in another man. But that intellectual equipment for the commanding of belligerent multitudes and the conduct of war is surely not the highest and greatest with which a human being can be endowed. Napoleon himself has described the kind of mental power that he found in his own experience to be called mostly into play. In one of the conversations at St. Helena reported by Las Cases he said: "The

The Quality of his Intellectual Powers.

fate of a battle is the result of a moment, — of a thought; the hostile forces advance with various combinations ; they attack each other and fight for a certain time ; the critical moment arrives, — a mental flash decides, and the least reserve [of troops] accomplishes the object." At another time he said to the same listener: "Success in war depends so much on quick-sightedness, and on seizing the right moment, that the battle of Austerlitz, which was so completely won, would have been lost if I had attacked six hours sooner." [1]

This electric quality of mind — the power to see, to put together and to apprehend as by a flash the factors of circumstance in any problem of the moment, in war or in politics — is what seems to have been really extraordinary in the endowments of Napoleon on their intellectual side. With it, on the under side of his nature, was an almost superhuman development of energy and will, and the casual combination produced all that was exceptional and extraordinary in the powers of the man. They were the powers of a great conqueror and a great despot, — not the powers of a great

[1] *Life, Exile and Conversations of the Emperor Napoleon.* I, pt. 2, pp. 6 and 143. London : H. Colburn. 1835.

statesman or of a great man. In what he did there is no sign of any wide sweep of vision, — any far-reaching forecast of circumstances and projection of thought, — any singular sagacity, even in the projects of his selfish ambition. Tested by the results of his ambitious undertakings, they were unwisely conceived and ill-harmonized with each other, representing no well pondered aim or design. Separately, they astound us by the energy and the matchless ability with which he carried them out; but survey them together, and what is there to marvel at or to admire? What but the ashes of a stupendous failure have they left in the history of the world? We are contemplating a career of *successes*, in a wonderful series, but not a career of *success*, as the grand product of a life.

Nevertheless, after all his intellectual limitations have been reckoned up, Napoleon is still a prodigy of genius, and would claim a place among the *great* of history if his moral nature had not been so hideously dwarfed and deformed. It is there that he shrinks to a littleness and meanness which no splendor of malevolent genius can redeem; and there, in that aspect, we must study the man.

In this study it is assumed that, where surpassing gifts of any nature are bestowed on a man, the mark and test and measure of greatness in him must lie in the motives and purposes with which and for which they are employed in the work of his life. We can apply this mark and test to Napoleon, not by any guessing of motives in what he did, but mostly by disclosures from himself. There is no mistaking, for example, the significance of his own ideals of greatness and a great career, which he disclosed many times, in conversations that have been reported by people who lived in intimate association with him. They were pagan, oriental, barbaric ideals, wholly alien to the spirit of civilization in our modern world. On the day of his coronation as emperor he said to Décrès, his minister of the navy: "My record has been brilliant, I acknowledge, and I have had an excellent career. But how different from ancient times! Take Alexander, for instance. After having conquered Asia he announced himself to the people to be a son of Jupiter, and, with the exception of . . . Aristotle and a few Athenian pedants, he was believed by the entire Orient. . . . If I were to

The Man tested by his Aspirations in Life.

announce myself to-day to be the son of the Everlasting Father, — if I were to declare that I was going to return thanks to Him by virtue of that fact, — there is n't a fish-wife who would not jeer at me as I passed. The people are far too much enlightened; there is nothing great left to be done." [1] *Nothing great left to be done*, with the power of the imperial sceptre which he took into his hands that day, because he could not practice, in a too-enlightened age, the imposture of self-deification, as Alexander had done!

The same thought had been in Napoleon's mind seven years before, when he said to Bourrienne, his secretary: "Europe is nothing but a mole-hill; it is only in the Orient that there have been great empires and mighty revolutions, — there where 600,000,000 people live." [2] It was the thought that took him to Egypt, and it filled his mind there with dreams. In talk with Madame de Rémusat, one of the ladies of his court while First Consul, he said, in 1803: "In Egypt I found myself free from the wearisome restraints of civiliza-

[1] *Napoleon the First.* By August Fournier, p. 410. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

[2] Fournier, p. 122.

tion. I dreamed all sorts of things, and I saw how all that I dreamed might be realized. I created a religion; I pictured myself on the road to Asia, mounted on an elephant, with a turban on my head and in my hand a new Koran, which I should compose according to my own ideas."[1] He never dismissed such dreams; his mind approved them to the end. During his captivity at St. Helena, in one of the conversations reported by General Gourgaud, he said: "Arabia awaits a man. Had I taken Acre I should have gone to India. I should have assumed the turban at Aleppo, and have headed an army of 200,000 men." In another of the same talks, speaking of Alexander's visit to the temple of Ammon, when the god was reported to have recognized him as a son, he praised it as an act of policy, and remarked: "So I, had I remained in Egypt, should probably have founded an empire like Alexander, by going on a pilgrimage to Mecca."[2]

Once Gourgaud mentioned to him that the

[1] *Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat*, 1802–1808, tr. by Mrs. C. Hoey and J. Lillie, vol. i, p. 149. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1880.

[2] *Napoleon: The Last Phase.* By the Earl of Rosebery, pp. 219, 220. New York: Harper & Bros.

sovereign in China is worshiped as a god; whereupon he replied gravely that "that is as it should be."[1] A morbid craving for that oriental worship must have been always in his mind.

One may read widely in the correspondence of Napoleon, and in the many memoirs of him left by those who lived in the closest intimacy with him, and find nothing to indicate a conception in his mind of higher objects in life or nobler aspirations than were embodied in these oriental and barbaric dreams. The thought of good service to his country, — of being in any way a benefactor to any part of mankind, — of earning a grateful fame, and leaving a fragrant memory for affectionate preservation in the world, can never have entered his mind without moving it to contempt. He had the morbid craving of a Nero for the kind of admiration that is mixed pungently with awe and fear; but if it lacked that flavor it was insipid to his taste.

In his own esteem he held himself so far above other men that he despised them all, and cared for nothing that they could give him except their obedience, their service, and the

[1] Rosebery, p. 168.

flattery of their dread. He said to General Gourgaud, at St. Helena: "I only care for people who are useful to me, and so long as they are useful." [1] In 1809, when negotiating peace with Austria, he said to the Austrian ambassador, Count Bubna: "A sovereign should not concern himself as to the opinion of his subjects." [2] At Leipsic, in 1813, when his course was nearly run, he said to Metternich: "A man like me cares little for the lives of a million men." [3] It is not to be doubted that he prided himself on being that kind of heartless man; just as he prided himself on being a man without moral restraint. He would say, Madame de Rémusat tells us: "I am not an ordinary man, and laws of morals and of custom were never made for me." [4]

The Enormity of his Selfish Egotism.

It was part of his heartlessness that he could be as cool in his feeling toward enemies as toward friends. Shortly after he became emperor he boasted to Madame de Rémusat: "I am not capable of acting from revenge; I only sweep obstacles from my path." [5] Las Cases, his most intimate companion at St. Helena, bears testimony to the truth of this boast. "I have

[1] Rosebery, p. 51. [2] Fournier, p. 481. [3] Fournier, p. 642.
[4] Rémusat, vol. i, p. 91. [5] Rémusat, vol. i, p. 249.

never known him," he says, "to evince the least feeling of animosity against those individuals who have been most to blame in their conduct towards him. He gives no great credit to those who distinguished themselves by good conduct; they had only done their duty. He is not very indignant against those who acted basely. . . . It is evident that he would be capable of becoming the ally of his most cruel enemy, and of living with the man who had done him the greatest wrong." [1] Chancellor Pasquier, in his memoirs, is a witness to the same effect. "The First Consul," he says, "never experienced any hatred or any affection not dictated to him by his self-interest." [2]

It is doubtful if another ever lived who did look at all men so entirely with reference to the use to be made of them or the hostility to be met in them, and with such passionless indifference otherwise. He looked for nothing else in the people with whom he dealt. He expected to secure devotion to himself by making it advantageous to his devotees, and fidelity appears to have had no other meaning in his mind. He trusted so entirely to self-inter-

[1] Las Cases, vol. i, pp. 335, 337.

[2] *Memoirs of Chancellor Pasquier*, tr. by C. E. Roche, vol. i, p. 160. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1893.

est for the binding of men to his fortunes that he dared continually to outrage the feelings of his most important ministers by insult and abuse. Says Talleyrand, who had experience of his insults, and who hated him accordingly: "Napoleon delighted in annoying, humiliating, tormenting those whom he had elevated."[1] His own cynical coolness would make him incapable of understanding the feeling that such treatment evoked, and he was equally incapable of a restraining generosity of soul.

A Man with no Friends.

Naturally, it has become a question whether he had a real friendship in his life. Lord Rosebery, in his "Last Phase" of Napoleon, concludes positively that "he had no friends" at the end of his career.[2] "Great masses," says the Earl of Rosebery, "who knew him only in his public capacity, chiefly as a general, adored him to the last. The private soldiers who marched from France to Waterloo were inspired with an enthusiasm for him which at least equaled that of the soldiers of Marengo and Austerlitz. But that enthusiasm diminished in proportion to re-

[1] *Memoirs of the Prince de Talleyrand*, ed. by the Duc de Broglie, vol. ii, p. 13. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

[2] Rosebery, pp. 273–275.

moteness from the rank and file. Officers felt it less in an ascending scale, and when the summit was reached it was no longer perceptible. It had long ceased to be felt by those who knew the emperor most intimately. Friendship . . . he had deliberately discarded, as too close a relation for other mortals to bear to himself. Many, too, of his early friends had died on the field of battle, friends such as Lannes, Desaix, and Duroc. But some had survived, and left him without ceremony, or even decency. Berthier, his lifelong comrade, the messmate of his campaigns, his confidant, deserted him without a word, and did not blush to become captain of Louis XVIII's body-guard. His marshals, the companions of his victories, all left him at Fontainebleau, some with contumely. Ney insulted him in 1814, Davoust in 1815. Marmont, the petted child of his favor, conspicuously betrayed him. Caulaincourt found a limit to his devotion at last. Even his body attendants, Constant and Rustan, the valet who always attended him and the Mameluke who slept against his door, abandoned him. It was difficult to collect a handful of officers to accompany him to Elba, much more difficult to find a few for St. He-

lena. The hopeless followers of ungrateful masters, the chief mourners of misfortune who haunted the barren ante-chambers of the Bourbons and the Stuarts, had no counterpart in the exile of Napoleon. . . . We must regretfully attribute this alienation, discreditable as it is to the deserters, more discreditably to Napoleon himself."

In saying that Napoleon had no friends Lord Rosebery has admitted a possible exception in Duroc, whom the emperor called his conscience, and from whom he was said to have no secrets. But, on Duroc's side, the friendship is denied by Bourrienne, who was a playfellow and schoolmate of Napoleon in boyhood and his private secretary in later life, and in whose memoirs we find this significant remark: "At St. Helena Bonaparte often declared that he was much attached to Duroc. I believe this to be true; but I know that the attachment was not returned." [1]

Bourrienne himself was one of many who entered Napoleon's service with an enthusiastic admiration of the hero as he shone in the public eye, and were disillusioned by close

[1] *Private Memoirs of Napoleon*, vol. i, p. 29. London: H. Colburn. 1830.

personal acquaintance with the real man. Baron Charles Doris, who wrote "Secret Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte," which were published anonymously in 1815,[1] as being by "one who never quitted him for fifteen years," made no concealment of the animosity of feeling with which he wrote, but said: "If any one has reason to blush at having considered this man with adulation, I was guilty for the space of two years. During that time I viewed him only at a distance, I judged only by his victories, by the reports of his courtiers; for courtiers, and very dangerous ones, he had in abundance. Circumstances on a sudden placed me about his person, — the charm disappeared. This was the work of only a fortnight." Elsewhere, the same writer remarks: "He [Napoleon] was never surrounded but by courtiers; never had he a true friend, not even in his own family. Imperious by system, no one could presume to be in the right in his presence if he would have it otherwise. . . . The people were to him what flocks are to the proprietors, he valued them for their bodies and their fleeces." [2]

[1] London: H. Colburn.

[2] Doris, *Secret Memoirs*, pp. 63, 45.

The ideals of Napoleon's ambition have been characterized as barbaric. So far as he went in the realization of those ideals he adhered to them exactly, and the spirit of the European despotism he established was not European and civilized, but oriental and barbaric throughout. In Italy, Holland, Germany, Spain, when he had vanquished them by his arms, he ground their unfortunate people under his feet, and terrorized them by such methods as a Tartar conqueror would have used. Give attention to a few of the orders that went to his satraps and generals, directly from himself, and in his own words! This, for example, to Holland, in 1811: "Have *the wife* of Gallet, the pilot who is in the English service, arrested, and have that sailor written to, that, unless he comes back to France, or proceeds to some neutral country, so that we may be sure he is not serving the English, *she and her children will be put in prison, into a dark cell, on bread and water*. Extend this measure to the wives and children of all pilots in the English service."[1] If you think that order barbaric,

A Barbaric Conqueror.

[1] *New Letters of Napoleon*, omitted from the edition published under the auspices of Napoleon III; tr. by Lady Mary Loyd, p. 249.

consider this, which went to Holland the same year: "My intention is that the 500 sailors who took part in the affair at Aurich [where some rioting had occurred] shall be arrested and brought to France, to serve at Toulon, Brest and Lorient; that several shall be brought before a military court and shot; that the most guilty of those who have fled shall be sentenced to death by default, *their fathers, mothers, wives, brothers and sisters imprisoned*, their houses burned and their goods sequestrated."[1] Could Timour or Attila have illustrated the temper of a barbaric conqueror and despot more perfectly?

The orders sent personally by Napoleon to his generals in Germany, in 1807 and 1808, are full of such instructions as these: "Have [Hersfield] thoroughly sacked to punish the insult offered to the sixty men of my troops." "Indicate the men each town is to give up on pain of being burnt. . . . Visible traces must be left to frighten the evil intentioned in Germany. It was thus, by burning the big village of Bignasco that I kept Italy quiet in the year IV." "Require the names of the four chief persons [at Crossen] who have corresponded

[1] *New Letters*, p. 233.

with the partisans [of Prussia], and you will do the same thing at Güntersberg and Mescritz. . . . You will have these twelve persons shot." [1] In March, 1813, at the outset of the German rising, he wrote to his step-son, Eugene, then commanding the French forces in Prussia: "At the least insult from a town or Prussian village burn it down, even if it were Berlin." On the 7th of May in the same year he wrote: "Send General Vandamme into Mecklenburg. . . . He will at once arrest all subjects of the town of Hamburg who have taken service under the title of 'Senators of Hamburg.' He will bring them before a court martial; he will have the five worst culprits shot, and he will send the rest under strong escort to France. . . . He will have the officers of the Hanseatic Legion shot. . . . He will draw up a proscription list of 500 of the richest and most ill-behaved persons belonging to the thirty-second military divison; he will have them arrested and their property sequestrated. . . . He will mulct the towns of Hamburg and Lubeck in the sum of 50,000,000." [2]

[1] *New Letters*, pp. 36, 37, 38.
[2] *New Letters.*

Even such barbarities of subjugation as these had been surpassed in 1806, when the Nuremberg bookseller, Palm, for publishing a purely patriotic pamphlet, entitled "Germany in her Deep Humiliation," was seized by Napoleon's order, dragged to an Austrian town, then held by invading French troops, tried by a military court, and shot. Less tragical, but more in outrage of the sentiment and spirit of civilization, was the insolent proscription and expulsion from Prussia of Baron von Stein, the ablest statesman of his day. Stein's wise measures of domestic reform, ending serfdom, clearing away as much as possible of the rubbish of feudalism, creating municipal institutions, abolishing commercial monopolies, and broadly laying the foundations of the new Prussia that has risen to leadership in Germany since, were feared and resented by the master of the French garrisons then quartered in Prussian towns. A decree launched from Madrid in December, 1808, commanded that "the man named Stein" should be dealt with as an enemy of France, his property confiscated and his person seized wherever found. "Inform the Prussian court," was Napoleon's further order

(December 16, 1808), "that my minister will not go to Berlin unless Stein is sent out of that capital and out of Prussia. You will go further; you will demand by letter to the Prussian minister that this person shall be given up as a traitor. . . . Let it be understood that if my troops lay hands on Stein he will be put to death." [1] Prussia could not protect her statesman, and Stein fled, first to the Austrian court, and finally to Russia, where he entered the service of the Tsar. In due time he returned, to become the master-spirit of the rising which drove Napoleon from Germany and ended his career. The Prussia which arose then from the dust of its humiliation, schooled and fitted for the making of the German Empire of to-day, was the monumental work of a few political architects, among whom Stein was the chief. "The man named Stein" has a monument that endures. What has the man named Napoleon left, of durable outcome from his life, to compare with that of Stein?

The tragic case of the Bourbon Duc d'Enghien, kidnapped from neutral territory in 1804 and brought into France to be shot,

[1] *New Letters*, p. 111.

in retaliation for a royalist plot against the life of the First Consul, has been staled by much controversy, and is recalled in this connection for the purpose, only, of citing Napoleon's own statement of his motives in that startling deed. He disclosed them in talk with his brothers, and his words were repeated by Joseph Bonaparte to Count Miot de Melito. We receive them from the memoirs of that gentleman, who had intimate relations with Joseph for many years. "I cannot disguise from myself," said Napoleon, "that I shall only be secure on my throne when not a single Bourbon is in existence; and there is now one less of them. He [the Duc d'Enghien] was the last of the great Condé's blood; the last heir of the grandest and fairest name of that house. He was young, bright, courageous, and consequently my most dangerous enemy. It was *a sacrifice absolutely necessary for my safety and my greatness.* And not only would I do what I have done over again, if necessary, but, to-morrow, if I had the chance, I would do the same by the last two scions of the family."[1] Here, frankly disclosed, is the purely personal motive which

[1] Miot de Melito, p. 354.

seldom fails to come to light in the doings of Napoleon, whenever we are able to catch a private expression of his feeling or his thought. It was not for the peace of France that the Bourbon prince was dragged lawlessly from a neutral country to be shot; but that violence to civilization was done because "*my* safety and *my* greatness" required the young prince's death.

So, too, when he compelled his brother Jerome to repudiate his marriage with Miss Patterson, of Baltimore, he put the demand upon the ground that Jerome must "wash away the dishonor with which he has stained *my* name. . . . His duty to me is sacred." [1]

The educational system of France was reorganized Napoleonically, with a single eye to the stamping of that idea, of a primary and sacred obligation of duty to the emperor, on the minds of the young. The direction of all teaching was centred in an "Imperial University," the first text-book provided for which was a catechism that formulated the political teaching in these words: "We owe to our emperor, Napoleon I, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service, tributes de-

[1] *New Letters*, April 22, 1805.

creed for the defense of the empire and of his throne. . . . We are under obligation to perform all these duties toward him, because God has crowned him with manifold gifts in war as in peace, establishing him as our sovereign, the instrument of His power, and giving him His own likeness upon earth." [1]

Public interests and public rights were thrust so entirely into the background of all Napoleon's political views, — all his policy was self-centred and self-motived so entirely, — that finally he was outspoken in declaring the fact, even to the public ear. In 1810 he had thoughts of adopting the elder son of his brother Louis, to make him the heir of his throne, and he published officially in the *Moniteur* the following admonition that he had addressed to the child: "You are never to forget, in whatever position you may be placed by my policy and the interests of my empire, that your first duty is to me, your next to France. Every other kind of duties, even those toward the people whom I might intrust to your care, come afterward." [2]

In the memoirs of Lucien Bonaparte, that

[1] Fournier, p. 409.

[2] Pasquier, vol. i, p. 426.

ablest and most independent of Napoleon's brothers protests against the supposition that the latter's wars were forced upon him; that he ever "made war contrary to his own choice at any time in his career." His ambitions, says Lucien, "made war a personal necessity to him";[1] and that is the ugly fact which the admirers of this great modern slaughterer have tried most to disguise.

The barbaric spirit in Napoleon was manifested not only in the nature of his ambitions, but in the demoniac savagery of his will. Resistance simply maddened it to ferocity. This appears in a horrible incident related by Constant, his devoted valet, in those curious memoirs which contradict the adage, that no man can be a hero to his valet. Constant accompanied his master to the camp at Boulogne, when armies and naval forces were assembled there, ostensibly in preparation for the invasion of England. One morning the emperor gave orders for a naval review on the open sea, and then departed upon a horseback ride which kept him absent for some hours. Meantime Admiral Bruix, the naval commander, saw the approach of a dan-

The Savagery of his Will.

[1] Fournier, p. 251.

gerous storm, and stopped preparations for the review. When Napoleon returned and found that such a liberty had been taken with his commands he was enraged, and a scene occurred which Constant relates as follows: "'Monsieur admiral,' said the emperor, 'why have you not executed my orders?' 'Sire,' replied the admiral, with respectful firmness, 'a horrible tempest is rising; your majesty can see it as well as I. Will you expose uselessly the lives of so many brave men?' 'Sir,' returned the emperor, more and more irritated, 'I have given orders; again I ask, why have you not carried them out? The consequences concern me only. Obey me.' 'Sire, I will not obey,' said the admiral. 'You are insolent,' cried the emperor, and he advanced, making a threatening gesture with the riding whip in his hand. Admiral Bruix recoiled a step and put his hand on the hilt of his sword. 'Sire,' said he, very pale, take care.' All present were frozen with fright. The emperor stood motionless for a moment, his hand raised, his eyes fixed on the admiral, who kept his defensive attitude. At length the emperor threw his whip to the ground, and M. Bruix, dropping his sword,

waited in silence, with uncovered head, the result of the dreadful scene. Turning then to Vice-Admiral Magon, the emperor said to him, 'You will execute instantly the movement I have ordered. As for you,' he continued, looking at Admiral Bruix, 'you will quit Boulogne within twenty-four hours and retire into Holland. Go!'"[1] Thereupon, to satisfy the crazed egotism of a heartless tyrant, the unfortunate fleet was sent out of harbor in the teeth of a tempest which made quick wreck of more than twenty gunboats and strewed the neighboring coast with the corpses of more than two hundred drowned men. When the inevitable disaster came, Napoleon was very active and conspicuous in efforts to rescue its victims, and the admiring valet who tells this tale seems to think that the imperial crime was more than atoned.

If the Napoleonic despotism had been no more than hard and even heartless there might be specious arguments in defense of it; but nothing that could palliate its barbarities can cloak the meannesses in his government, the pettiness of spirit in it, and the frauds and

[1] *Mémoires de Constant, premier valet de chambre de l'Empereur, sur la vie privée de Napoléon*, vol. i, ch. xiii. Paris: 1830.

the lies. Its meanness was illustrated in his petty-minded persecution of the ablest woman of her generation, Madame de Staël. He said "she inspired thought in people who had never taken it into their heads to think before, or who had forgotten how," and he drove her from France. For years he pursued her, through malignant and insulting directions which he gave personally to his police. "Do not allow that jade to come near Paris," was the sort of order that he flung at intervals to the head of the police.

His Corps of Spies.

There was no department of his government which Napoleon kept more carefully under his own searching eye and his own directing hand than that of the police. His correspondence is full of personal orders, informations, rebukes to its ministerial chiefs, showing how much he planned and supervised the meanest details of its work, especially in espionage and in the suppression of free speech. He was far too distrustful, however, to depend on the fidelity and efficiency of the regular police, but organized circles within circles of his own private corps of spies, each watchful of the other and all, together, infesting court, government, and so-

ciety at large with thousands of treacherous eyes. In the "Secret Memoirs" that I have quoted heretofore it is said that these spies "pervaded every part of the administration, both civil and military; they obtained a footing about all the great personages of the state; they penetrated into their families, into their private societies. This band, which he jokingly called his 'telegraphic company,' was independent of the general police, whose agents, charged with watching strictly over the people, were themselves no less rigidly watched. The number of these dangerous stipendiaries amounted in the month of March, 1803, to three thousand six hundred and ninety-two. . . . Gentry of place and title, writers and merry-andrews, workmen and state annuitants . . . and all that youth, beauty, the graces and agreeable talents could produce, of the most seductive kind in each sex, was to be met with in this society." [1]

Upon the press Napoleon was his own spy. Not an unsanctioned or undictated word could be printed without calling forth a sharp personal reprimand to the head of police from the imperial pen. His correspondence is full of

[1] Doris, *Secret Memoirs*, pp. 94, 243, and 249.

such notes as this, of April, 1808, calling attention to some newspaper publication of extracts from sermons of the day: "I had forbidden the newspapers to refer to priests, sermons, or religion. . . . Will the police be good enough to do my will?" At another time, in the midst of hasty preparations for the war of 1809 with Austria, he has leisure to notice that a French archbishop has manifested some prayerful interest in the illness of the ex-Queen of Spain, and he writes thereupon: "Let me know why the clergy ask the people's prayers for any person without leave from the government."

As for political discussion in the newspapers, he established his system of imperial management in 1806, when he wrote to Talleyrand: "It is my intention to have the political articles for the *Moniteur* written by officials in the Foreign Office, and, after I have observed for a month how these are done, I shall forbid the other newspapers to discuss politics otherwise than in imitation of the articles in the *Moniteur*."

Worse than the meanness of Napoleon's despotism was its falsity. He scorned the civilized estimates of honor, honesty, and truth,

declared his belief in lying and knavery, as fine arts in the conduct of life, more especially in government, and was boastful of his proficiency in both. No one could know him better than Madame de Rémusat, who was the neighbor and friend of Josephine before her marriage to Napoleon, and who became her most trusted "lady-in-waiting" from the beginning of the Consulate until Josephine's divorce. For ten years she lived as closely to the man, saw as much of him behind the scenes of his great theatre, and talked with him as intimately, as any person could. She entered his household with a worshipful admiration of his seeming greatness, and she gave up her admiration very slowly; but it vanished utterly in the end. Her final verdict was this: "No man, it must be allowed, was ever less lofty of soul. There was no generosity, no true greatness in him. I have never known him to admire, I have never known him to comprehend, a fine action. He always regarded every indication of good feeling with suspicion; he did not value sincerity, and he did not hesitate to say that he recognized the superiority of a man by the greater or less dexter-

His Meanness and his Shameless Falsity.

ity with which he practiced the art of lying. On the occasion of his saying this he added, with great complacency, that when he was a child one of his uncles had predicted that he should govern the world, because he was an habitual liar."[1]

Chancellor Pasquier, who had large opportunities for knowing him well, pronounced a similar judgment, in the candid and dispassionate memoirs that he left: "His [Napoleon's] heart," wrote the chancellor, "was bare of that which could enlighten it as to the advantage to be derived from generous impulses."[2] Such testimony prepares us to trust the account which Talleyrand gave to Madame de Rémusat of a talk with Napoleon in 1813, when the cynical frankness of the latter in disclosing the completeness of his own moral debasement might otherwise exceed belief. "In reality," he is reported to have said, "there is nothing noble or base in the world. I have in my character all that can contribute to secure my power, and to deceive those who think they know me. Frankly, I am base, essentially base. I give you my word that

[1] Rémusat, vol. i, p. 6.
[2] Pasquier, vol. i, p. 160.

I should feel no repugnance to commit what would be called by the world a dishonorable action."[1]

That he carried such theories of dishonor and dishonesty into practice systematically is beyond dispute. Even in their day it was discoverable that his war bulletins and reports were painted thick with lies: lies to magnify his victories, to minify his failures, to steal even little scraps of glory from his subordinates, or to smirch them with the blame of his own mistakes; but the full extent of the meanness and the shameless audacity with which that system of lying was carried on did not come to light till later times. "The whole truth," says Bourrienne, his private secretary, "never appeared in Bonaparte's dispatches, when it was in any way unfavorable to himself. . . . He not unfrequently altered the dispatches of others."[2]

A flagrant example of the many attempts he made to falsify history for his own glorification appears in his dealing with the facts of the battle of Marengo. It was the most important to him of his greater victories, because it

[1] Rémusat, vol. i, p. 8.
[2] Bourrienne, vol. i, p. 260.

established his prestige and affirmed his power at the beginning of his consular reign; and yet, of all his battles, it appears to have been the least creditable to himself. Personally he had lost it, and it was won back for him by a division-general, Desaix. For almost, if not quite, the only time in his career, he had been deceived as to the position of the enemy, and had divided his army, on the day before the battle, sending Desaix with his division to make a movement which proved to be gravely mistaken in plan. The Austrians surprised him by an attack in overpowering numbers, and his troops had given way, when the tide was turned suddenly by the reappearance of Desaix. That admirable officer had heard the sound of battle; had caught its meaning instantly; had recognized that his own movement was a mistake, and had turned back. By rapid marching he arrived at the critical moment of Napoleon's defeat, and died leading a charge which recovered the lost field. In Napoleon's report of the battle no hint of these circumstances is allowed to appear; and, to make sure of their suppression in official documents, at least, he caused all of the reports of his subordinates to be destroyed. From his dispatch, as we find it in the sixth

volume of the "Correspondance de Napoléon I, publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III" (pp. 360–362), I quote the story as he told it of the victory that was snatched from defeat. "The battle," he wrote, "appeared lost. We allowed the enemy to advance within gunshot of the village of San Giuliano, where Desaix's division was in line, with eight pieces of light artillery in front and two battalions in close column on the wings. All the fugitives were rallied behind it. Already the enemy committed faults which presaged disaster to them; their wings were too extended. The presence of the First Consul reanimated his troops. 'Children,' he said to them, 'remember that it is my habit to sleep on the battlefield.' To cries of *Vive la République! Vive le Premier Consul!* Desaix charged the centre of the opposing line. In an instant the enemy was overthrown." That is the whole mention of Desaix's agency in the battle. Nothing in it of credit to him for being there, at the village of San Giuliano, at the opportune time for rallying a routed army and shattering the victorious foe. Nothing to show that he had not been there from the first of the fight, and by the wise arrangements of his chief. Nothing to

spare one honest shred from the glory of the self-glorifying First Consul, whose animating presence is set forth as the all-sufficient explanation of what occurred.

One of the gravest of Napoleon's failures was in the siege of Acre; but he covered it from public knowledge at the time by a daring falsification of facts. He announced that he had destroyed the town and its fortifications, and had taken a great number of prisoners, but had refrained from entering the place because plague was raging within it. The truth was, that the town, supported by the British fleet of Sir Sidney Smith, had withstood his utmost efforts, and that he retreated from it, and from Syria, with nothing to show for his ambitious undertaking in the field of his Asiatic dreams. There was nothing to shame him in the failure, but there is infamy in the boastful lying with which he tried to cover it up.

His Faithless Diplomacy.

The diplomacy of Napoleon was systematic in faithlessness and deceit. He gave to every government and people that had dealings with him some experience of knavish tricks. Our own country went through the experience in a peculiarly mortifying way. In 1809 it had been suffering for three years

from the attempts of France and England, in their warfare, to destroy neutral trade. It had tried to retaliate by President Jefferson's experiment of an "embargo," with no effect on the conduct of the belligerents; and then Congress passed a conditional act of non-intercourse, or non-importation, which President Madison should enforce against each of the offending powers till its orders and edicts against neutral trade were withdrawn. Thereupon Napoleon gave notice to the American minister at Paris that his decrees were "revoked," and President Madison, trusting the announcement, proclaimed it, suspending the operation of the act so far as concerned importations from France, but interdicting entries from British ports. He soon found that he had been duped. American ships that ventured within reach of the knavish despot were seized, as before, and no satisfaction or explanation could be obtained. There was never a sign that the decrees had been revoked. Napoleon had thought the opportunity good for embroiling the United States with Great Britain, and did not hesitate to employ a falsehood to that end.[1]

[1] H. Adams, *History of the United States*, 1801–1817, vol. v, chs. vii-xiv, xvi, xviii.

For many years Napoleon played upon the inextinguishable hope of the Poles that their broken nation might be restored, deluding them with expectations of his help, in order to use them against Russia; while always, when it suited him to turn a pacific face toward the Russian or Austrian court, he was giving secret assurances there that Poland had nothing to hope for from him.

In like manner he tricked the king of Prussia into a disgraceful alliance with himself, by a tempting pledge of the electorate of Hanover, from which the English had been expelled. A little later, when he came to discuss terms of peace with Great Britain, he offered the restoration of Hanover as freely as if the Prussian treaty bore no such pledge.

Treaties meant no more to him than tricks of the moment for winning some advantage in his stupendous games. He had no thought of being bound by them longer than they served his ends. In 1805, when he forced the Dutch into an alliance with himself against England, he engaged by treaty to secure the restoration to them of any colonies they might lose in the war. Two years later, when preparing to compel them to accept his brother Louis as their

king, he wrote to Talleyrand: "The arguments to be brought to bear with the Dutch are, that otherwise I will not see that a single one of the colonies lost to England is restored to them when peace is made."

After Louis had been seated on the throne of Holland, Napoleon extorted from him a treaty which ceded important parts of Dutch territory to France, and placed the whole Dutch coast under French military surveillance. In return for this, the treaty provided for a removal of existing restrictions on Dutch trade with France. When the faithless extortioner of the treaty had secured what it gave to him, he turned a deaf ear to the demands of his brother for fulfillment of its terms on his own side. The French restrictions on Dutch trade were not removed; and this was one of the causes of the disgusted action of Louis Bonaparte, who sickened of the puppet part he had to play and abandoned his fiction of kingship, taking refuge in Austria from his brother's wrath.

But Spain, among the victims of Napoleonic faithlessness and falsity, suffered most. The series of treacheries and frauds that were practiced, in the infamous process of the theft of

her crown, began with an illusory treaty for the partitioning of Portugal, in which Godoy, the base minion who ruled the Spanish court, should share. Under cover of this vile bargain, French armies, ostensibly in transit to Portugal through Spain, got the footing on Spanish soil which placed the government of the kingdom in their power. Of all the iniquities in Napoleon's career, the successive transactions in this Spanish undertaking are nearly, if not quite, the most glaring in their display of the baseness of the man. Even the unscrupulous Talleyrand claims to have remonstrated against the rankness of his master's cheating in the rascally game, and to have been jeered at for doing so when the game seemed won. "See," cried Napoleon to him, "what all your predictions as to the difficulties I should encounter, in regulating the affairs of Spain according to my views, have amounted to. I have overcome these people; they have all been caught in the nets I spread for them, and I am master of the situation in Spain, as in the rest of Europe." [1] This was the fated delusion of the man, cheating himself more ruinously than others were cheated by him. He had caught

[1] Talleyrand, vol. i, p. 288.

in his nets and overcome — not Spain, but the corrupted Spanish court. When the Spanish people woke to the consciousness of their situation, they broke his fine-spun webs, and started forces in motion that overcame *him*, and cast down the whole false fabric of his power.

Toussaint l'Ouverture.

If anything in the history of Napoleon can be fouler than his treatment of Spain we find it in his dealings with the revolted blacks of San Domingo, and the perfidious barbarity with which Toussaint l'Ouverture was lured into captivity and done to death. In one of the historical essays of Mr. Henry Adams the revolting story is traced through official documents in the French archives, and told, for the most part, in the words of the agents employed, and in those of the master whose commands they obeyed. The tale opens in 1801, when Napoleon, then First Consul, being momentarily at peace with England, prepared to "annihilate," as he expressed his intention, "the government of the blacks at San Domingo." He sent for the undertaking a great army and fleet, with his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, in command. Leclerc bore a proclamation to the blacks, which said to them:

"The government sends you the Captain-general Leclerc. He brings with him great forces to protect you against your enemies, and against the enemies of the republic. If you are told, 'these forces are intended to ravish your liberty from you,' reply, 'The republic has given us liberty; the republic will not suffer it to be taken from us.'" General Leclerc bore also a personal letter from the First Consul to Toussaint l'Ouverture, the extraordinary leader who had risen among the African ex-slaves, who had checked the destructive frenzy of their revolt, and who had organized a government which restored the ruined island to an orderly and promising state. The letter was sweetened with friendly assurances in every word. "Assist the captain-general with your counsels, your influence, and your talents," it said to Toussaint. "What can you desire, — the liberty of the blacks? You know that in every country where we have been we have given it to the people who had it not." Then come personal flatteries and promises: "After the services you have rendered, and those you can render in these circumstances, together with the particular sentiments we have for you, you should not be uncertain of your consideration,

your fortune, and the honors that await you." Such were the words of the master of France to Toussaint and to the blacks at large; but now listen to the secret instructions he gave to Leclerc: "The instant you shall have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks shall be disarmed, send back to the Continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a part in the civil troubles."

Neither Toussaint nor his followers yielded to the wiles of Leclerc at once, and the captain-general was employed for some months in a campaign which drove them to the mountains and induced their submission at last. In May, 1802, Leclerc reported to his government the terms on which he had accepted the surrender of Toussaint; they were as follows: "He must surrender to me at the Cape, and I would give him my word of honor that after the conference he should have the liberty to go where he would." Toussaint surrendered accordingly; and one month later Leclerc wrote to Napoleon: "I have taken a step that will do much good to the colony. I have, as I warned you, arrested General Toussaint, and I send him to France to you, with all his fam-

ily. . . . He had written me to complain of my having stationed troops at Dennery, which he had chosen as his residence. I answered that, to remove all ground of complaint, I authorized him to confer with General Brunet on the station of the troops in that canton. He went to General Brunet. There he was arrested and embarked." No doubt this was written by Leclerc and read by Napoleon with pride in the successful perfidy of the act.

And now the sinister story becomes tragic. Napoleon wrote approvingly to Leclerc: "The arrival of Toussaint has been extremely honorable to you," and he signed a secret decree ordering Toussaint to be imprisoned in the fortress of Joux, in the Jura Mountains, and to be kept there in solitude and secrecy, without power to write or speak to any person save the servant who should attend him. Evidently there was hope of finding grounds on which he could be disposed of in some plausibly legal way; for Leclerc was asked to forward proofs against him. Leclerc, however, was compelled to report that, since the amnesty granted to Toussaint, there was no guilt of anything to be proved against him. Whatever, therefore, should be done with the

captive Dominican patriot and statesman must be done by naked despotism, with no pretense of law. Helped by the winter cold of the Jura Mountains, the Napoleonic despotism was equal to that need. As winter approached, Toussaint failed in health. His jailer, reporting weekly, wrote on the 30th of October: "He has continual indispositions, caused by internal pains, headaches, and some attacks of fever which are not continuous. He complains always of cold, though making a great fire. . . . No one is allowed to see him but myself." Then the well-instructed jailer adds this, which he must have written with an evil grin on his face: "The constitution of negroes resembling in no respect that of Europeans, I dispense with giving him either physician or surgeon, who would be useless for him." Five months of this most intelligent jailer work sufficed. On the 19th of March a promising report went from Joux to Paris: "The situation of Toussaint is always the same. He complains continually of pains in the stomach, and has a continual cough; for some days he has kept his left arm in a sling on account of pains. I perceive that in the last three days his voice is much changed." Three weeks later,

on the 9th of April, 1803, the faithful and successful jailer made his final and most satisfying report: "I had the honor to render you an account of Toussaint's condition by my letter of the 16th germinal [April 6th]. The 17th, at eleven and a half o'clock in the morning, on carrying his food to him, I found him dead, seated on his chair, near the fire."[1]

This tale needs no comment.

Pettiness of Spirit.

The evidence now submitted seems more than enough to support my contention that the false, faithless, perfidious barbarism and baseness of spirit which characterize the despotism of Napoleon are incongruous with any right conception of greatness in a man. But there was a pettiness of spirit in his nature that seems more incongruous still. It was manifested conspicuously in the increasing servility of etiquette that he forced his court, his military officers, and even his family to submit to, as fast as his honors grew. After his Austerlitz campaign, it is said, his brothers were not allowed to sit in his presence, and did not venture to address him without being spoken to. His wife, Jose-

[1] *Historical Essays.* By Henry Adams. Essay 4. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1891.

phine, no longer ventured to use the familiar "thou" in speaking to him, but addressed him always as "Your Majesty." To sit while others stood appears to have been a mark of superiority that was specially gratifying to his vanity. He exacted it in camp as well as in court. In the curious memoirs of his valet it is related that, when the emperor was with the army assembled at Boulogne, his chair was the only seat in the room where he held long councils with his marshals and generals, and they stood sometimes for hours. Even at St. Helena the petty gratification of such servile forms of deference was required for him, and the unfortunate officers who went with him, to solace his captivity, often stood in his presence till they were ready to drop with fatigue.

There was nothing less than paltriness and vulgarity of mind in the eager appetite he showed for every kind of formality that would signify the inferiority of others to himself. Madame de Rémusat relates the particulars of a scene which was one of the first to reveal to her the vulgar spirit of the man. With Bonaparte (then First Consul) and Madame Josephine, she was a guest one day at dinner with the Consul's elder brother, Joseph. Their mo-

ther was of the party, and Joseph, with filial propriety, had arranged to give her the place of honor at the table. This arrangement was resented by Napoleon, who claimed precedence and consideration even before his mother, and even in the family circle. When dinner was announced he seized his wife's arm, drew her quickly to the table, in advance of all, and seated her and himself as he desired.[1]

This petty-minded, jealous exaction of every possible show of deference to himself gave the taint of vulgarity as well as barbarity to all his despotism. Thirteen Roman cardinals who failed to accept invitations to the ceremony of his marriage with Marie Louise of Austria were arrested, exiled, their property sequestrated, and they were forbidden to wear their official dress.[2] The Archbishop of Bologna, guilty of the same offense to the despot, was compelled to resign. Giving personal orders for this, Napoleon wrote: "Shameful conduct of a man whose infamous debaucheries I have concealed, by intervening with my authority and interrupting the course of criminal proceedings at Bologna."[3] "Infa-

[1] Rémusat, vol. i, p. 116. [2] Pasquier, vol. i, pp. 406, 407.
[3] *New Letters*, 1810, April 3.

mous debaucheries" of the Archbishop could be disregarded by the omnipotent lord of Italy, but not a slight to his august invitations.

Napoleon and the Pope.

In Napoleon's treatment of the Pope there was not only an insolent defiance to all Catholic Europe, and a wanton outrage to its feeling, but there was a mean personal malignity as well. He had seized the Papal States and annexed them to France. Thereupon (June, 1809) the Pope, Pius VII, employing his sole weapon of defense, issued a bull of excommunication against all who had taken part in these acts, naming none. In the following month, by the emperor's order, he was arrested like a criminal, and taken from Rome, to be kept in rigorous imprisonment, first at Savona, Italy, and finally at Fontainebleau, in France, for five years. His treatment in that period was regulated personally by Napoleon, and the progressive meanness and malice of it are shown by such orders as the following, quoted from his published letters:[1]—

November 28, 1810. "Give orders that all letters written by the Pope, or by members of his household, and all those sent to the Pope, or to his household, are to be forwarded to Paris."

[1] *New Letters*, 1810–1811.

January 1, 1811. "As the Pope has been misbehaving himself at Savona, I desire you will give orders that the carriages I had placed at his disposal should be sent back to Turin, and *that his household expenses should not be allowed to exceed* 12,000 *to* 15,000 *francs* [$2500 to $3000] *a year*. Make sure that no letters are received at Savona, or sent from there."

January 2, 1811. "The Pope is stirring up disorder everywhere. . . . He is sending whole sheets of diatribes in all directions. . . . The prefect is the only person who must be allowed to see him."

January 6, 1811. "As I desire to protect my subjects from the rage and fury of this ignorant and peevish old man, I hereby order you to notify him that he is forbidden to communicate with any church of mine, or any of my subjects, on pain of the punishment consequent on his disobedience and theirs. . . . Tell him that a man who preaches rebellion, and whose soul is full of hatred and malice, ceases to be the mouthpiece of the Church. . . . He shall see that I am strong enough to do as my predecessors did before me, and depose a pope. . . . *You will leave him no paper, nor pens, nor ink, nor any means of writing.*"

The "predecessors" referred to in this last order were those sovereigns of the early Germanic-Roman empire who controlled the papacy for a time. Napoleon had reconciled himself in a measure to the loss of that oriental and entirely barbaric career of conquest for which his ambition thirsted always, but he did so by turning to the dark ages of Europe for substitute or secondary ideals of grandeur in life. Since fortune forbade his being a second Alexander, or a second Mahomet, and he could not venture in the modern world to claim divinity for himself, he found his highest attainable satisfaction in fancying that he had revived or recreated the empire and the glory of Charlemagne. "You see in me Charlemagne"; "I am Charlemagne, — yes, I am Charlemagne," — were his boastful exclamations more than once, on occasions when his arrogant temper exploded in abusive harangues to people who had crossed his will. It came even with deliberation from his pen, as well as angrily from his tongue. Writing, in 1806, to his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, who represented him at the papal court, before he had broken up that court, his command was: "Say to him [the Pope] that I am Charle-

magne, the Sword of the Church, their emperor, and that I propose to be treated as such."[1] It was a vulgar pose; the pose of an imitator who saw nothing in Charlemagne but an embodiment of barbaric domination, and was wholly incapable of appreciating or taking lessons from the real majesty of character in that large-minded chieftain of a rude age.

I apply the term vulgar, as I apply the terms mean and barbaric, to Napoleon, because there seem to be no others that will describe certain exhibitions of his nature so correctly. There was a fundamental coarseness in him, morally, mentally, and temperamentally, which expressed itself habitually in vulgarisms, as well as in barbarisms and meannesses of word and deed. He had the talent of an actor, along with other talents, and he had all the pleasing capabilities of a facile mind. By abundant testimony we know that he could be an agreeable companion when it suited his humor to be agreeable. He could act the part of a gentleman, as he could act many parts; but when he put on the manner of courtesy and the disposition of amiability, it must have been as an actor dresses himself for the stage, in cos-

[1] Fournier, p. 331.

tumes that are not proper to his natural self. According to many witnesses there was little to indicate the gentleman in his manner and bearing at court, after the full inflation of his arrogant consciousness of power. "He cast off," says Fournier, "all semblance of courtesy. He would say, for instance, to a lady [at his receptions], after she had stated her name, 'O Heavens! I had been told you were pretty'; or, to an old man, 'You have not much longer to live,' and such like urbanities."[1] This agrees with another account of his receptions as emperor, which states that when he walked about, preceded by chamberlains who announced him, "he never remembered a name, and his first question to ladies was, 'And what do you call yourself?'" The coarse feeling and vulgar quality of the man was displayed most offensively at the Erfurt meeting of emperors, kings, and princes, in 1808, where he invited Prince William of Prussia to a rabbit-hunt on the battle-field of Jena, and had some of his soldiers, in the presence of the Tsar, relate incidents of their exploits during the then recent war with Russia.

By these and other things that I find in the

[1] Fournier, pp. 411, 412.

vastly voluminous records of Napoleon and his career I feel myself forbidden to regard him as I wish to regard Great Men. I cannot think of his meaner qualities without contempt, and I cannot think of contemptibility and greatness as possibly existing together in the same man. Nor, amazed as I am at the marvel of his life, can I think of it as representing a *great* career. Its emptiness of great results was declared long ago, with truth and candor, by his private secretary. "Not having done for the welfare of mankind what he undertook for his own glory," wrote Bourrienne, "posterity will judge him by what he has achieved. He will have full credit for his victories, but not for his conquests, which produced no result, and not one of which he preserved. His claim to the title of one of the greatest captains that ever lived will be undisputed; but he left France less than when she was trusted to him, and less than she had been left by Louis XIV. His brilliant campaign in Italy gave Venice to Austria and the Ionian Isles to England. His Egyptian expedition gave Malta to the English, destroyed our navy, and cost us 22,000 men. The civil code is the only one of Bonaparte's legislative

The Empty Outcome of his Career.

acts which can be sanctioned by philosophy and reason. All his other laws were null, and rested only on his existence. Did he, either as consul or emperor, contribute to the happiness of France? Posterity will answer in the negative."[1]

This I judge to be a verdict that will stand. The one benefaction to France or to the world that it finds for credit, to offset the horrible reckoning of death, misery, crime, and wrong in the Corsican's bloody career, is the code of law which bears his name. And how much of that was his work? Even the project of the codification of law was not his own. It had been in the minds of the men of the Revolution, but postponed by the commotions of the time, till he had opportunity to take it up, and commit it to a selected body of the ablest jurists of France. Sometimes he presided at their sittings, and is said to have surprised them on occasions by the shrewdness and practical value of the suggestions he made. That kind of contribution to such a work is precisely what a mind like his, of electric quickness and alertness, could make; but nothing that went deep into the principles of law can have come from him. He had no interest in the principles

[1] Bourrienne, vol. i, pp. 394, 395.

of things, no knowledge in matters that rest upon principles, no faculty for dealing thoughtfully with them. The Code Napoleon, so called, was Napoleon's work no farther than this: that he had the intelligence to recognize a need for it, and the power to have it done.[1]

I have said that he had no interest in the principles of things, and no knowledge in matters that rest upon principles. This fact is very marked in his attitude of mind toward economic questions. He expressed it frankly in one of his letters to Fouché, his minister of police, —a notorious rascal, but a remarkably able man. "I have received," he wrote, "a farrago which you have sent me on the subject of the corn trade, and which is perfectly ridiculous. It is mere political economists' chatter. . . . These arguments are pitiful in themselves, but they have one great drawback, — that of encouraging the commercial community to lecture the government, to open discussion and disturb men's minds. The administration has nothing to do with political economy."[2] Thus he scorned persistently all suggestions of economic principle in the fiscal and commercial

[1] Pasquier, vol. i, p. 249.

[2] *New Letters*, July 28, 1809.

measures of his government, and pursued a course of headstrong blundering in them, from beginning to end.

Summing conclusions, it is to be said of Napoleon that a more extraordinary man in some respects has never appeared in the world; that no man ever scored on the face of the history of his own time a deeper, heavier, more sanguinary mark; that no such deep mark was ever effaced more completely when the pain, the grief, the crimes and oppressions that scored it were cured by the healing of the years. Taken out of the imperial wrappings in which he came to be vestured, and scrutinized in his bare personality, as a man, the astonishing Corsican is seen to be so dwarfed in soul, so small and mean in the dispositions of his feeling, so destitute of all nobility of nature, that we cannot call him a Great Man without defiling the idea.

III

CROMWELL: IMPERFECT IN GREATNESS

III

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For the understanding of Oliver Cromwell, and of the English regicide revolution in which Cromwell bore the chief part, it is necessary to have clear ideas of Puritanism. In its consequences, and partly in its causes, the revolution was a political one, but its animations were supplied to it most powerfully by that religious movement of the English mind, in the seventeenth century, which underwent many changes and divisions, but which remained Puritanic through them all, according to the original signification of the term.

The seeds of Puritanism were in the Protestant appeal from the Church to the Bible, as the sole depository of God's law, and its root was in the feeling of an immediate, close personal relation and communication between each devout soul and its Creator, which came necessarily from that Biblical faith. To look straightly to the Bible for spiritual light and teaching, instead of taking them secondarily, through a medium of inter-

The Root of Puritanism.

preting authority in the Church, led not only to a new view of the Church, as the organ of Christian faith and worship, but led also to a new view of worship, and of all devotional attitudes and exercises of the human spirit. Priestly functions in worship, and the ritual, the form and ceremony which go naturally with sacerdotalism, were depreciated inevitably in this, which came to be known in England as the Puritan view. It was developed peculiarly in England, partly by the seriousness of the English character, and partly by circumstances which gave a peculiar shaping to the outcome of the English secession from Rome. That secession had been controlled in the beginning by an absolutely despotic king, who made it an act of separation, simply, with nothing of change in the Church excepting the substitution of himself for the Pope as its head.

The Church of England then created was organized, like the Roman Church, under a hierarchy of archbishops, bishops, and other official clergy, and it adhered to a ritualized or ceremonial worship, not much changed from the ancient forms. Substantial departures in doctrine were introduced under Edward VI and Elizabeth, when the prayer-book of the

new Church was composed and Thirty-nine Articles of a positive creed were affirmed and prescribed; but, so far as sacerdotalism and ceremonious worship were concerned, there was little concession to that simplifying demand which arose naturally, as I have said, from Protestant views. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the demand had considerable English growth, and it was then that the name of "Puritans" was acquired by those who made it heard. Their want, as they described it, was more *purity* of worship in the Church — more of spirit, less of form. Generally, they had no desire to alter the constitution of the Church.

Though the influence of Calvin was beginning to be felt strongly in England, his scheme of presbyterian organization, to displace the episcopal, was not taken up to an important extent by the early Puritans, most of whom were faithful to the communion of their national Church and strove only for a relaxation of its liturgical forms. So far as the Calvinistic constitution of Christian churches was favored, and so far as congregational separateness was sought, those sectarist departures, of Presbyterians and Independents, can

only be regarded as offshoots or branches of one strenuous movement of religious feeling, which takes a fitting name from the Puritans of the Elizabethan age.

The Puritan Revolt.

Puritanism was intensified peculiarly in England by the persisting effort of the Crown and the hierarchy of the Church to put it down. While Elizabeth lived the Crown was practically omnipotent, and all resistance to it was weak; but it lost half of its prestige and strength when a foolish, conceited, bad-mannered, and often ludicrous king came from Scotland to represent it, and made clumsy attempts to wield the sceptre of the Tudors in their autocratic way. Then everything touched oppressively by the royal hand took courage to resist, and oppressed Puritanism was the quickest to be moved by the spirit of revolt. Both political and religious feeling rose slowly to the white heat of revolution, during forty years of provocation from the first two Stuart kings; but the steadiest, surest fermentation of it was always on the spiritual side. Neither suppression of Parliament, nor lawless taxation, nor prostitution of courts hardened the temper of the nation so much as the ritualistic despotism of King

Charles and Archbishop Laud. The fact that the real animus of revolution was in Puritanism became plain when the crisis of civil war was reached. Then those, like Falkland and Hyde, who had opposed the King on political grounds chiefly, went over to his support, and the party that took arms against him was essentially Puritanic throughout. In the battle years of the revolution no man came to any real leadership on the parliamentary side who was not actuated more profoundly by religious than by political feelings and aims. With all else that he embodied of personal genius and power, Cromwell could never have borne the part that he did in that great transaction if he had not been a Puritan of Puritans, — the perfected Puritan type. My wish is to show what went to the making of that type.

The career of Oliver Cromwell, like that of Napoleon Bonaparte, was opened to him by a great upheaval which overturned an ancient monarchy and slew its king. Like Napoleon, he took the fallen sceptre into his own hands, acquiring it, like Napoleon, by the prestige of the soldier and the mandate of the sword. So far, in the bare outlines of circumstance, the parallel of their careers is exact; but in every

particular that gives a historic quality to the men and a meaning to their lives they ran divergent courses from first to last. The surpassing strength of both was in a surpassingly energized and centred will, which carried the lesser energies and weaker wills of other men into strains of action that ran obediently with theirs. Of character in common between them there was nothing else.

But, before touching questions of quality or character in Cromwell, it will be best, as in the discussion of Napoleon, to recall the stage-setting and the chief incidents of the notable drama in which his remarkable part was performed.

Cromwell as a Country Gentleman.

Oliver Cromwell owed his family name, and a little of the blood in his veins, to the ancestry of Thomas Cromwell, the ill-famed minister of Henry VIII. A sister of that wrecker and robber of monasteries married one Williams, a Welshman, who dropped his own name to take his wife's, transmitting it thereby to his great-grandson, Oliver, and with it a strain of Celtic blood which had influence, no doubt, in making Oliver Cromwell what he was. The latter sprang from a younger branch of the family

thus new-named, which had a modest but substantial place among the gentry of Huntingdonshire. He was born at Huntingdon, not far from Cambridge, on the 25th of April, 1599. He spent his boyhood and had his schooling in that town, till his entrance to Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge, which occurred on the day of Shakespeare's death, — the 23d of April, 1616; a fact which led Carlyle to say impressively, in his introduction to Cromwell's letters: "The first world-great thing that remains of English History, the Literature of Shakespeare, was ending; the second world-great thing that remains of English History, the armed appeal of Puritanism to the invisible God of Heaven, . . . was, so to speak, beginning." Cromwell's college matriculation, however, can hardly be thought of as marking any point of beginning in his career. He was a student at Cambridge for only a year, when his father's death brought him away, and there is no evidence that he returned. It is not likely that he had any taste for the student life, or would get much from it. Tradition has it that he went to London and read law for a time, but the statement is not proved. The next certain fact of

his life is his marriage, which occurred in his twenty-second year. Thereafter, for eleven years, he farmed the small estate which his father had left; then sold it and rented a grazing farm at St. Ives, not far away. In 1636 he fell heir to some property from an uncle, which carried with it the farming of the cathedral tithes of Ely, and this led to his removal to Ely, where he or his family resided till his engagement in great affairs of the nation took him and them into very different scenes.

History has little knowledge of this plain gentleman farmer of the Fen Country during the first two thirds of his fifty-nine years of life. In all that period he was a man as little in the public eye as any of the kingdom, within his modest class. Two or three brief letters from his pen that have survived, and a few very slight records or mentions of him in contemporary writing, afford all the glimpses of himself or his doings that the most searching biographer has been able to catch. That he won leadership among his neighbors quite early is shown by the fact that they elected him to parliament from Huntingdon in 1628, he being then twenty-nine years of age.

It was the parliament which fairly opened the long conflict with Charles I; which passed the famous Petition of Right, and after the dramatic dissolution of which England had no parliament for eleven years. We can be sure that Cromwell, as a member, was with his cousin, John Hampden, and with Eliot and Pym, and all the grand patriots of that day, in his voting; but his place in the great council of the Commons was among the silent and obscure. According to its journal he spoke but once, a few words only, to call attention to a preaching of "flat popery," as he styled it, at St. Paul's Cross. And so he comes upon the stage of public life as a Puritan, from the first. How much and in what ways he helped, during the next eleven years, to fan the kindling anger of the people in his own district, while the king extorted "ship-money," and Laud practiced his stupid tyranny in the churches, and the flogging and ear-cropping of good men were made familiar spectacles in London, and some thousands of disheartened Puritans went to exile on Massachusetts Bay, we are not told; but no temper is likely to have been more fermentable than his in those days, or more energetic in the dif-

In Parliament.

fusion of its heat. That he was naturally hot in temper, and that it broke from him too readily in early life, is beyond dispute. Once, in 1630, he was taken to London under arrest, for unseemly wrathfulness in speech to the mayor and aldermen of Huntingdon, concerning an unpopular new charter they had procured. Ten years later, when he sat in parliament again, Mr. Hyde, afterward Earl of Clarendon, acting as chairman of a committee which gave a hearing to disputants from Cromwell's district over an inclosure of common lands, had an experience of that gentleman's passionate rudeness of speech which he remembered to describe with some bitterness in the history that he wrote. But this hot blood in the man was brought under resolute discipline at last, by a will which mastered everything within him and without.

In many ways he was a roughly fashioned man; not coarse, by any means,—for much of fine, sweet quality in him is plainly to be seen; but the surface-growth of character and manner was rude,—made so, no doubt, by the very simplicity and straightforward action of the tremendous store of force in the man. He was as careless of his personal appearance as

he was careless of polite ways. A fastidious listener, who heard him speak in parliament a little before the beginning of his greater career, described him as being "very ordinarily appareled," with "linen not very clean," his "countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable," "his eloquence full of fervor," and observed that he "was much hearkened to," which seems to have caused this critical auditor some surprise. Thus homely and inelegant he stands pictured to us, just as Fame is summoning him to her temple, for the laurel crown of heroic immortality and for its stately robe.

The long interruption of constitutional government was ended by an outbreak of revolt, not in England itself, but in Scotland, the original Stuart realm. There, Calvinism and the Presbyterian form of church government, introduced at the Reformation by John Knox, had become the very roots of the national faith, and when Charles and Laud attempted to put their clergy under bishops and to force a prayer-book on their churches the Scots, by thousands, signed a solemn national covenant to defend their kirk and took arms to make the covenant good. This Scottish revolt com-

pelled the king to summon an English parliament, in the spring of 1640, and ask its help; but it showed a temper when it met that alarmed him, and he dissolved it in three weeks. For a few months longer he strove with the Scots, trying to fight them with an army which he could not pay, and was driven in the end to face another English parliament with another appeal.

This, the famous Long Parliament, which ruled England for the next dozen years, came together in November, 1640, and made haste, with irresistible determination, to strip the king of powers he had usurped and prerogatives he had abused: declaring its own indissolubility by any royal command; annulling the illegal doings of late years; abolishing or restricting the jurisdiction of tribunals which had served the ends of despotism; sending evil counselors of the king to the Tower, and Strafford, the most feared among them, to the headsman's block. Cromwell sat in this parliament, as he had done in the "Short Parliament" that preceded it, and unquestionably he was active, but he had no prominence in its work. In the great chapter of history that was now being written, Pym, Hampden, Vane,

St. John, Falkland, Hyde, Hollis, were still the conspicuous names. But Cromwell's day of fame drew near.

For a time, Charles seemed to give way in everything to the parliamentary attack, signing the bills which disarmed and humiliated him, and withholding from Strafford the royal protection he had promised; but his scheming mind was busy with plots and projects, which led him finally, in January, 1642, to invade the precincts of parliament with an armed retinue, and attempt the seizure of five members who had displeased him most. Warnings had reached the threatened members and they had escaped. London rose in arms to protect them, and both parties to the conflict between king and parliament began preparations for war.

Cromwell and "the Ironsides."

At the present day it can be seen, as it could not be seen at the time, that the ultimate triumph of parliament in the ensuing war was determined and insured, practically, by Cromwell, and by him almost solely, from the first hour that preparations for an armed struggle began. That result, for a long period of the war, depended on local action in different parts of the kingdom, far more than on the ineffective

military administration which parliament was able to organize; and it was Cromwell's section of England, led and stimulated, unquestionably, by him, which inspirited the whole cause from the first, giving examples of vigor and lessons of efficiency in everything done. The troop of horse which Cromwell raised and captained at the outset imparted its quality to the regiment which came under his command in the early weeks of 1643; and in due time that "Ironside" regiment became the model on which the whole parliamentary army was re-formed and transformed into an absolutely invincible force. Nature had prepared this farmer of the Fens, in mind, temper, and power of will, to be a great soldier, and religion had specialized his preparation for the particular war that was now to be fought. He was quick to see what measureless fighting energy could be embodied in a Puritan army, if its faith were as firm and its zeal as ardent in the ranks as in the command. He began at once, as he related afterwards in a speech, to enlist "such men as had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did," and, as he could add with perfect truth, "they were never beaten, and

wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually." This was the winning principle of the war. By Cromwell's example and his urgency the army of parliament came at last to be composed almost wholly of men who "had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did"; and its progress in victory was at the rate of its advance toward that character, and of Cromwell's advance in military rank and command.

But Cromwell did not put all trust in the spirit of his men. He had the master soldier's instinct for discipline and for training in the use of arms. He took instruction for himself and for his troops from old soldiers of the Thirty Years' War. He is said to have caught the ideas of Gustavus Adolphus, who is credited in military history with having given a new value to the horse in war by new formations and a new handling of mounted troops. Cromwell seems to have bettered the instructions of the Swede, and to have made his cavalry a more formidable force in battle than had ever been realized before.

I shall not trace the course of events in the war, except to outline the work of Cromwell and the successive steps of his rise to the sum-

mit of military command and political power. During the first year of the war he was but a cavalry colonel, notably active and energetic in the counties which had formed a self-organized military district, styled the Eastern Association, extending from Essex at the south to Lincoln at the north. His vigorous operations in this field drew such attention to himself and his small command that a contemporary memoir dates "the beginning of his great fortunes" from the later months of that first year. Early in 1644 he was made lieutenant-general of the forces of the Eastern Association, under the Earl of Manchester, and, in the summer following, at Marston Moor, where he commanded a division of cavalry, he won the honors of the first great battle and victory of the war.

The First Civil War.

The forces that fought the king at Marston Moor were partly from Scotland, English and Scotch having now made common cause against the oppressor of both. The northern nation was far more united in its rebellion than that of the south, and its assistance to the English Puritans in their struggle had become a vital need. To secure it, the latter were forced to submit to a requirement on

the part of the Scots, that the "doctrine, worship, discipline and government" of "the Church of Scotland" — that is, the creed and organization of Presbyterianism — should be established in England and Ireland, and a "Solemn League and Covenant" to that effect was subscribed on both sides. This agreement was acceptable to one large part of the English Puritans, whose minds were friendly to the plan of a reconstructed national church, framed on Calvin's lines, but bitterly objectionable to another large part, whose thought and feeling were against the dictation by law of any uniformity in creed and church. The latter party, of Independents, was increasing, and an increasing variety of sects was rising in it, with no bond of unity except the demand that all should have equal freedom to form their churches and conduct their worship as they wished. This opened a cleft in the great Puritan party which had fatal results. In parliament the Presbyterians predominated; in the army, Independency was rooted deeply already, and was having a rapid growth. Cromwell seems to have been slow in committing himself fully to either side, and I believe that he strove earnestly to avert the impending

antagonism between parliament and army on the question of religious uniformity and an established church. With all his religious intensity he had a broadly tolerant disposition of mind, so far as concerned Puritan differences of opinion; but his Christian toleration went little beyond the Puritan line. In the end, to save religious liberty for Puritanism, he gave his powerful leadership to the Independents, and made them masters of the army and the state.

Meantime Cromwell, still serving in parliament as well as in the field, brought about a remodeling of the army, to unify it, to give it more earnest and energetic chief commanders, and to fill it generally, as he had filled his own regiments, with men who "had the fear of God before them." To accomplish the change of high officers, parliament adopted a "self-denying ordinance," so called, which incapacitated its own members for military command. This retired the Earl of Essex, the Earl of Manchester, and some other generals who were suspected of a lack of earnestness in the war, but likewise it removed Cromwell, himself. His withdrawal from the army, however, was very brief. Sir Thomas Fairfax, appointed to be

commander in chief of the New Model Army (April 1, 1645), demanded Cromwell for his lieutenant-general, and the latter, with permission from parliament, returned to the field in time to be the hero and the winner of the decisive battle of Naseby (June 14, 1645), which destroyed the hopes of the king. What is known as the First Civil War was ended in the following May, by the voluntary surrender of the king to the army of the Scots.

Before this occurred, the covenant of parliament with the Scots had been fulfilled in a measure, but not to the satisfaction of the Presbyterians, either English or Scotch. The Presbyterian system of church government was established in England experimentally, for three years, in March, 1646; but it took no root, and, though the authority of the church assemblies was much limited, its working, as a church establishment, just sufficed to stiffen the intolerant aims of its supporters and to harden the opposition of other sects.

Supremacy of the Army.

For nine months the king was in the custody of the Scots; then, having received partial payment for their service in England, they gave him up to parliament and returned to

their own land. Both Scotch and English leaders had labored vainly in this period to arrive at some agreement with the stubborn yet slippery intriguer, that would secure them, religiously and politically, against his former practices of absolutism, if they restored his throne. The English were still patient in the same useless parleying with their captive king for nearly two years more. He thought that the widening rupture between Independents and Presbyterians — between army and parliament — would make him master of the situation, and he played a game of double dealing with both. Elections to fill vacancies in parliament (with royalists disfranchised) had reinforced the Presbyterians, and they overestimated their strength. They dealt fatuously with the army, offering trifles of pay on a long score of arrears, while planning the disbandment of some regiments, the sending of others to Ireland, and treating army petitions with angry contempt. The army, on its side, became defiant of the authority of parliament, and acts of mutiny and violence were begun. The regiments ordered to Ireland refused to go. A troop of horse, sent by nobody knows whom, took the king from his parliamentary

custodians, in June, 1647, and the soldiery, thenceforward, controlled his fate. A little later a peremptory demand went to parliament from the army, that eleven of the Presbyterian leaders of the Commons should be ejected from their seats, and the eleven felt constrained to withdraw. This excited an insurrection in London, where Presbyterianism prevailed; parliament was invaded by a mob, and the speakers of both houses, with many members, left the city, taking refuge with the army, which had drawn near to the town. Then the army, led by Fairfax, brought them back, entering the capital in imposing procession, and establishing itself there as the master power in the state. And now, as such, it assumed the character of a self-organized political body, by the formation within it of a representative council, composed of certain general officers in conjunction with four deputies from each regiment, two chosen from its officers and two from the ranks.

This organization of antagonisms in the great Puritan party gave good reason to the king for thinking that large opportunities were being opened to himself. With sense and honesty he might have made much of them; by

follies and falsities he threw them away. Cromwell headed a party in the army which still believed that the best settlement of things in the distracted country might be found in some agreement with Charles, and he persisted in negotiations to that end, though the army in general stood in bitter opposition to his course. He found at last, as every one found who dealt with Charles, that no conclusive agreement and binding contract was attainable, by any possibility, with that faithless and shifty-minded schemer. While the parleyings were in progress the king escaped from Hampton Court, his place of custody, hoping, apparently, to make his way to France; but his flight ended at Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, where he became a prisoner again.

The Second Civil War — The Doom of the King.

There was now a rapid thickening of confusions in the whole state of affairs, with the result, at last, of a reopening of civil war. The king had enlisted the Scots in his behalf, by consenting to establish Presbyterianism in England for three years if he was restored to his throne, and a Scottish army crossed the border in July, 1648, to coöperate with royalist risings in England and Wales. Fairfax crushed the roy-

alists in the southeast, while Cromwell made short work of their rebellion in Wales. The latter then hastened northward to meet the invading Scots, whose army, more than double his own, he destroyed in three days of battle and pursuit (August 17–19, 1648), beginning near Preston, from which the fight takes its name. This was the first battle in which Cromwell held supreme command, and critics rank it high among the masterpieces of military skill. It left little to be done for the finishing of the Second Civil War.

The royalist rising had failed, but it had brought to the surface and disclosed a very formidable growth of public feeling against the dominating military party, and favorable to some arrangement for the restoration of the king. The English Presbyterians, while unfriendly, as a rule, to the Scottish interference, had become inclined to make common cause with Charles; and their representatives in parliament were encouraged to act again with a bold hand. They passed persecuting ordinances, which struck at many opinions entertained in the various Independent or Congregational sects, and they reopened negotiations with the king. By the time that the

men of the army had returned to quarters from the Second Civil War, they found a political coalition of Presbyterians and royalists against them, with the destruction of their leaders and the suppression of their religious independency most surely decreed. They sent up a great remonstrance, and parliament refused it even respectful consideration.

Then came a sharp cutting of knotted tangles in the situation, by the soldier's sword and the headsman's axe. On the first day of December the king was taken suddenly by a body of officers from Carisbrooke Castle and lodged more securely in Hampshire. On the second day the army was marched again into London. On the sixth and seventh a regiment commanded by Colonel Pride surrounded Westminster Hall and arrested or excluded about a hundred of those members of parliament who had figured most in its recent work. By this "Pride's Purge," as it was styled, the Long Parliament, which began a noble career in 1640, was cut down to the fraction known ignobly in history as "The Rump."

One of the first proceedings of The Rump was responsive to a demand from the army that justice should be done to the king, as the

guilty author of the civil war. On charges of treason he was brought to trial before a High Court, created by the appointment of one hundred and thirty-five commissioners, of whom no more than sixty-nine were ever present at the sittings of the court. The trial was opened in Westminster Hall on the 20th of January, 1649, and closed on the 27th, when a sentence of death was pronounced. The sentence was executed three days later, on a scaffold erected at the front of the palace of Whitehall.

From the first of the preceding May, when Cromwell went off to the field of his campaigns in the Second Civil War, down to the evening of the day on which parliament was "purged" of Presbyterianism by Colonel Pride, little is known of Cromwell's agency or influence in what was done on the political side of events. Some things in his letters of that period go to show that he shared a rising disposition in the army to assert and exercise authority in itself against parliament; but whether he did or did not give any kind of direction to what was done in the southern parts of the island while he was in the north, is quite unknown. Pride's work of "purging" was in progress when he reëntered London, after the absence of seven

months. In one of the memoirs of the time he is reported to have said that "he had not been acquainted with this design, yet, since it was done, he was glad of it, and would endeavor to maintain it." That he approved and maintained it is certain; but in this matter, and in many other doings of his party that have been laid to his personal account, it seems probable that he merely accepted and made the best of what he had no personal agency in bringing about. He was singularly disposed, I think, to accept the movement of events, and go with it in his own action, instead of exercising the mastery that is commonly supposed; and this accepting disposition, which I wish to consider later on, supplies to my mind the true key to his character and career.

Taking his seat in the Rump Parliament, Cromwell bore a part in its proceedings against the king; but apparently it was not a leading part. In his one reported utterance, when the ordinance creating the High Court was discussed, he said: "Since the providence of God and necessity hath cast this upon us, I shall pray God to bless our counsels, though I be not provided on the sudden to give you counsel."

This can only mean that he took counsel, rather than gave it, on the grave question before the house. But when it had been decided that the king should be tried for his crimes against the nation, and Cromwell was called to sit among the judges, then the courage in him that never flinched and the spirit that knew no swerving took their inevitable leadership, in determining the doom of the man who had made himself a problem which nothing but his death could solve.

The wreck of constitutional government in England had now left nothing but a small, sifted remnant of the House of Commons, elected more than eight years before, to act with assumed authority in the national name. "Yet this little band of men assumed to be, not merely a true house of commons — one branch of a true parliament — but a full and complete government for 'the Commonwealth of England,' as the state was now described. It abolished the house of lords as 'useless and dangerous,' and 'the office of a king' as 'unnecessary, burdensome and dangerous'; and so it boldly took all the functions of government into its own hands." For executive action a council of state, which

Cromwell's Campaign in Ireland.

differed little from a parliamentary committee, was appointed, and Cromwell, of course, was in its membership. For active support this new government had not even the full strength of the Independents to depend upon, nor even the army as a whole. The Levellers (followers of the radical agitator, John Lilburne) were a trouble to it from first to last. But, for a time at least, the Commonwealth had a passive support in the country at large which made it strong. It is the opinion of Professor Gardiner, the most candid and careful of the historians of the period, that "for every hundred convinced royalists or republicans there were at least a thousand who were ready to accept whatever government was actually in existence, rather than risk disturbance of the peace by a fresh civil war." [1]

If England was tolerant of the self-constituted government which had transformed the ancient kingdom into a nominal Commonwealth, Scotland and Ireland were not disposed to leave her in passive submission to it. Both countries were offering conditions to the late king's elder son, Charles, on which they would support his claims to the English throne.

[1] *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, vol. i, p. 281.

These threatenings gave Cromwell his final military tasks. Between midsummer in 1649 and the spring of 1650 he crushed the Irish combination of Catholic and Protestant royalists in a horribly merciless campaign. The savage massacres which he personally ordered at Drogheda and permitted at Wexford have left a stain on his memory too black to be effaced by his own defense of them, — that they would tend to prevent the future effusion of blood, by their terrorizing effect. The campaign in Scotland, following closely upon that in Ireland, was the crowning of Cromwell's military career. At the beginning he seemed to be outmanœuvred by the Scottish general, David Leslie, and was forced into a dangerous position at Dunbar; but he caught a moment of opportunity for so deadly a stroke at the beleaguering enemy that they were utterly routed and half destroyed (September 3, 1650). This, however, did not end the war. The Scotch, after exacting from Charles II a solemn oath to uphold the Presbyterian Church in their own country and to force it on England and Ireland, had crowned him king at Scone, and he had established his court and government at Perth, under Leslie's

protection, which Cromwell was not able to overcome till the summer of 1651. Then Leslie and the young king, dislodged from Perth and Stirling, took what seemed to be the only course left them, and led their army boldly into England, with the hope of being joined by hosts of royalists as they advanced. Cromwell had foreseen the movement and prepared for it. As the Scots marched down the western side of the island he followed by the eastern route, gathering forces on the way. When they reached Worcester he was in their path, and there, on the 3d of September exactly one year after Dunbar, he finished his military work. He had no more battles to fight.

Cromwell the Head of the State.

When Cromwell returned from the field of war to the seat of government, his rank, no less than his personal prestige, made him practically the head of the state. In the previous year, after the Irish campaign, he had been appointed Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of all the forces of the Commonwealth, and as such he overtopped every other existing functionary of government in official rank. This cast upon him, almost necessarily, and without presumptuousness on his own part, the responsible in-

itiative of action in all that was subsequently done. The fact is one to be borne in mind. It is true that his chieftainship was commissioned more validly by the qualities of force and courage which made him a born leader of men; but there is nothing to show that he ever acted on that authority alone. Undoubtedly his influence over parliament and in the council of state, during the last year and a half of the Commonwealth, was very great, but not to a controlling degree. He opposed, for example, the opening of war with the Dutch, regarded it always with impatience, and ended it as soon as he had power. It is most probable, but not certain, that he strove to broaden the bases on which a measure of religious freedom was established, and could not succeed.

On one question he did take the peremptory and decisive lead; and that concerned the dissolution of the Rump and the election of a "new representative" to take its place. For months that worn-out remnant of the Long Parliament had dallied exasperatingly with demands from the army and the public, that it provide for some kind of a new election, and dissolve itself. Nobody in the dominant party

thought of venturing a free election; but the hope was entertained that judicious restrictions of the suffrage might bring forth a parliament that would be true to the Commonwealth, while commanding a fair measure of respect. This did not accord with the views of the gentlemen of the Rump, who proposed an election for no more than the filling of vacant seats. Cromwell tried to reconcile the disagreement by a meeting of leaders on the two sides of the question at his rooms. They parted with the understanding that they would meet again, and that nothing should be done meantime with the pending elections bill. Next morning, however, Cromwell learned that a quorum of parliament had assembled very early and was pushing the bill through. Thereupon he hastened in wrath to the house, with a guard of soldiers following, and after a speech of violent denunciation, called his musketeers in and ordered the chamber to be cleared. As the members passed out he cried to them: "It is you that have forced me to this, for I have sought the Lord night and day that He would rather slay me than put me on the doing of this work."

The expulsion of the Rump was followed

by the dissolution of the council of state, and no governing authority remained but that — purely military — of "the Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Commonwealth." He protested, with evident sincerity, that it was repugnant to him, and he attempted to reconstitute a civil government for the nation in a strange way. Instead of instituting a new parliament by even a limited election, he summoned a select body of one hundred and forty "persons fearing God," chosen partly by himself and a council of officers, but nominated in large part by the Congregational churches of the country. These were to take upon themselves "the great charge and trust" of providing for "the peace, safety and good government" of the Commonwealth. Their assembly was an experiment on the theory of the so-called Fifth Monarchy Men of the time, who claimed that the day had come for the setting up of the Kingdom of Jesus and the reign of the saints — the fifth and last of the great monarchies of the world. Cromwell had rejected their doctrine, and yet he yielded to them in this critical experiment, — which failed. The assembly of God-fearing men

He Dissolves the Rump Parliament.

proved utterly without knowledge for the work which it did not hesitate to undertake, and its speaker did the nation a good service when he ended its session abruptly, in an arbitrary way (December 10, 1653).

Thus absolute power returned to Cromwell again. And now he accepted from his council of officers a written constitution which had been under discussion for some months. This, known as "The Instrument of Government," placed "the chief magistracy and the administration" in a person to be styled "Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland," and it provided for the summoning of a parliament (of one house) in which the three countries should be represented. The powers of the Lord Protector were limited not only by those of parliament, but by the functions of a council, which he was not free in choosing, but whose advice in most matters he was required to take. "Oliver Cromwell, Captain-General," was named in the Instrument as Lord Protector "for his life"; his successors to be chosen by the council.

Rules as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth.

A parliament elected, as prescribed in the Instrument, by persons who had not "aided,

advised, assisted or abetted in any war against the parliament since the first day of January, 1641," came together on the 3d of September, 1654, and gave trouble to the new government before the end of a week. There appeared to be a republican majority, which began at once to question the very Instrument under which it was convened, proposing to discuss "whether the house should approve of government by a single person and parliament." Cromwell put a sharp check on this movement, by requiring the members to sign a pledge "not to alter the government as settled in a single person and a parliament." Those who would not sign were dismissed. Those who did sign kept an attitude of hostility to the Protector, and he dissolved the parliament as soon as the Instrument gave him authority to do so (January 22, 1655).

Then followed a period of really absolute military rule, exercised, not by the Protector alone, but by the Protector and his council, which seems to have shared authority with him to the full extent prescribed in the Instrument of Government. Otherwise, that constitutional document had little force. In this period of twenty months the government had

to deal with many conspiracies, insurrections, and hostile combinations, not only of Cavaliers, but of Levellers, Fifth Monarchy Men, and other factions into which the old Puritan party of the civil war was now broken up. Furthermore, it had undertaken an energetic use, in foreign waters, of the strong naval force which Vane, in the late Commonwealth government, had organized, and which Blake and Monk had made famous and formidable in the war with the Dutch. It had acted vigorously against the Barbary pirates; interfered with effect to stop the massacre of Waldensian Protestants in Piedmont; opened war with Spain to secure freedom for Englishmen from the Inquisition, and an entrance for English shipping into the West Indian trade; and it had raised England to a new standing among the European powers. For the strenuous work which these circumstances required it used military methods and military force. It resorted to what Cromwell described later as "a little poor invention," dividing England and Wales into a dozen military districts, each under a major-general, whose duty was not only to preserve order by summary means, but to exact one tenth of the

annual income of all disaffected persons, as an arbitrary tax.

This military government proved effective enough in preserving public order, but its hatefulness to the nation became so plain that a new parliament was summoned in the summer of 1656. The major-generals of the government used all possible influence to prevent the election to it of troublesome men, and yet nearly a hundred of the members elect were excluded from the house when it met, on various grounds. Among the early doings of the new parliament was the rejection of a bill to legalize and continue the authority of the major-generals. This seemed to be an act of independence; but the army found reason to suspect that it was prompted by Cromwell himself. His state of mind, his purposes, his agency in occurrences then and after, are all obscure and much in dispute. It seems not improbable that he tried, privately, to break the government in some degree from its close connection with the army, and to obtain for it a constitutional basis not derived, as the Instrument of Government had been, from the army circle. Therefore, some instigation from him may have started and stimulated a discus-

sion in parliament which began in the mid-winter of 1657 and went on for four months, resulting in the formulation and acceptance of what was known as "The Humble Petition and Advice."

Originally this instrument contemplated a change of title in the chief magistrate, from Lord Protector to King. Those who argued for the royal title were undoubtedly right in saying that it bore prerogatives that were interwoven with the whole body of English law, and that it commanded a deference from the mass of the people which no other title would receive. It was an argument that must have weighed in Cromwell's mind, and may easily have inclined him to the proffered crown, more than personal ambition could have done. The same proposal of kingship, on the same grounds of reasoning, had been made by the framers of the Instrument of Government, and then he had put it aside. Now, it seems certain that he was prepared to accept, and would have done so if the republican opposition in the army had not assumed a startling tone. As it was, he declared finally and positively: "I cannot undertake this government with the title of king," and was re-installed

with great ceremony as Lord Protector under the new law (June 26, 1657). His functions and powers, however, were intended to be substantially those of a constitutional king. He was given the right to name his successor, and the further right to name the life-members of a body now created by the new constitution, to be a substitute for the defunct House of Lords.

It was this "other house," for which no fitting official name could be found, that brought the new scheme of government to speedy wreck. It seemed a travesty of the House of Lords. Its powers were ill-defined and wide-opened to dispute. In selecting its members the Protector had drawn away from the commons his strongest supporters, while admitting to that body those unfriendly members whom he had shut out before. The result was a powerful majority of the House of Commons in deadly opposition to the government, denying to the "other house" any share in legislation, and implacably determined to embarrass the Protector by every means in their power. For a single fortnight, in January and the beginning of February, 1658, the two houses of the reconstructed parliament sat

and gave pitiable proof of a hopeless situation; then the Protector appeared before them and pronounced their dissolution.

His Last Days.

If anything could daunt the soul of Cromwell, he must have shrunk with dread from the prospect that confronted him then, when every attempt at government by less than sheer dictatorship had failed. Happily for him, the troubles it stored would soon be for others to bear. He had but seven more months of life. They were months of sore public trial, of private affliction, then of sickness and death, which came to him on the 3d of September, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, the two great victories which had closed his military career.

The Two Views of Cromwell.

And, now, with what feeling shall we think of this man, whose death gave an ignoble triumph to ignoble enemies; whose grave they violated, whose memory they blackened in history? Shall we think of him as they did, that he was the meanest of hypocrites, the falsest of cunning adventurers, the most self-seeking of despots? or shall we think with Carlyle, who valued him "above all other sorts of men"? I doubt if any of us can go even nearly to either one

or the other extremity of these opposing views. But here, if anywhere in history, is a case that calls for the use of such definite principles of judgment as I have proposed to apply in the estimating of exceptional men. Let me bring them to bear, as briefly as I can.

Estimate of His Endowments.

Firstly, then, we have to take account of the kind and quality of the endowments that gave Cromwell the power to do what he did, and then to find, if possible, — not by guess, but by clear disclosure, the motives that actuated and the purposes that gave direction to his course. As to the fundamental sources of power in him, they are as unmistakable as in Napoleon, or in any other of the greater soldiers and commanders of men. Inexhaustible springs of an abnormal personal force, partly of the spirit and partly of the flesh; an unflinching courage and fortitude of the same twofold strength; an alert, watchful, practical mind, quick to realize situations of circumstance, prompt to discern opportunity, and ready in fitting means to ends: — bring these gifts of power to an adequate service, in an adequate field, and the inevitable product is a greatly victorious soldier, or a greatly dominant political chief, or

both. So far there is close likeness between Cromwell and Napoleon; so far they are men of the same extraordinary breed; so far, too, Cromwell takes the lower rank. But that ranking is reversed when we come to consider the difference of motive in the two men.

His Motives of Action. — Sincerity of his Religious Beliefs.

In Napoleon we found unmistakable revelations of motive concentrated, from the beginning to the end of his career, in ambitions that were selfish, vulgar, and barbaric. In Cromwell, the revelation is just as clear to my mind of motives that sprang purely and almost entirely from the absoluteness and the fervor of his religious beliefs. It was in the service of the Lord that he fought, and in the service of the Lord that he took on himself the heavy burdens of the state. That conviction is borne in on me when I read his letters and speeches, significant in little and eloquent in nothing but the always insisting desire to trace signs of divine leading or assistance in what he and his soldiers and his party have done. They have the ring of sincerity; they are not cant, as the careless judgment of former times pronounced them. The whole mind and heart of the man was in the belief they express. It was a belief not

easy for the present generation to understand. Generally, in the religious thought of our time, there is a conception of the divine government of the world which differs very greatly from that which Cromwell and his fellow Puritans entertained. In their thought it was not so much a government determined from the beginning by a divine wisdom exercised in fixed forces and laws, as it was a government conducted from hour to hour, and from event to event, by an always watchful divine eye and an always acting divine hand. In Cromwell's profoundest belief God's relation to the Puritans of the English conflict was identical with His relation to the Children of Israel in olden time. Every Scripture word addressed to Israel was equally a message to them. They were His people. They were upholding His cause. Their antagonists were His enemies. When they pleased Him He gave them success, and the glory was His; it was proof of His displeasure if reverses or discouragements came. The whole course of events was a succession of "providences," to be studied, like a chart of divine signals, for the discovery of passing dispositions in the mind of God. Expressions of this belief break constantly from Cromwell,

in every account of his battles, in every speech he made to parliament, and in most of his letters to his friends. After the battle of Marston Moor he wrote: "It had all the evidences of an absolute victory obtained by the Lord's blessing upon the Godly party principally. We never charged them but we routed the enemy. . . . God made them as stubble to our swords." In reporting the capture of Bristol to the speaker of parliament he wrote: "They that have been employed in this service know that faith and prayer obtained this city for you." To his mind the battle of Dunbar was an absolute and final decision, by the judgment of God, of questions between the English Independents and the Scottish Presbyterian Kirk. "The Lord hath heard us," he declared to the ministers of the Kirk, who had shut themselves up, with the garrison, in Edinburgh Castle, and would not accept his invitation to come down to their pulpits and preach, — "the Lord hath heard us, though you would not, upon as solemn an appeal as any experience can parallel." They answered coldly that they had "not so learned Christ as to hang the equity of their cause upon events." This was rank blasphemy to Cromwell, and he cried

again to the preachers in stern expostulation: "Did not you solemnly appeal and pray? Did not we do so too? And ought not you and we to think, with fear and trembling, of the hand of the Great God in this mighty and strange appearance of His, instead of slightly calling it an 'event'? Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time, whilst we waited upon God, to see which way He would manifest Himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations and solemn appeals, call these bare 'events'? The Lord pity you."

Even in the horrid massacre at Drogheda, which came from a rare outbreak of barbaric battle-rage in himself, he could see a divine purpose, as he wrote, to save in the future "much effusion of blood, through the goodness of God." As for the slaughter at Wexford, he laid the responsibility upon the Lord with no reserve. He himself, he wrote to Speaker Lenthall, had intended "better to the place than so great a ruin"; but "God would not have it so."

So, in all the conflict, he was looking continually for signs of the immediate, present hand of God. In all his correspondence he is

forever stimulating his colleagues and friends to be watchful of the wonderful "providences" of the time, and to see them as he sees them, and to take their meaning as he does. The providential influence that he recognizes so unquestioningly, consults so assiduously, and strives faithfully to be guided by, is not only traced by him in the turn of battles, but equally in the movements of feeling and opinion among those whom he held to be "God's people." This appears very plainly in one of the most remarkable of his letters, written in November, 1648, when the army had reached the state of mind which led to "Pride's Purge" of parliament and to the trial of the king. Cromwell wrote then to his friend Colonel Robert Hammond, the commandant of Carisbrooke Castle, who was in grave doubt as to the leading of duty, if civil and military authority were broken apart. "My dear friend," wrote Cromwell to him, "let us look into providences; surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together; have been so constant, so clear, so unclouded. . . . What think you of Providence disposing so many of God's people this way, — especially in this poor army?"

This disposition of mind was not peculiar to Cromwell; it was common in his party, — especially so in the army of his creation; but one can hardly doubt that much of the deeper inspiration of it came from him. There is nothing in the history of the time more significant or more interesting than the account of an extraordinary prayer-meeting held by the army leaders at Windsor, early in the year 1648. This was a little before the outbreaking of what is called the Second Civil War, when a Scottish army crossed the border to assist royalist risings in England and Wales. The captive king Charles had been the centre of parleyings and intrigues through all the year past; parliament and army had been drifting into antagonism, more and more; the distractions of the situation increased from day to day. Thereupon a considerable body of leading officers in the army agreed to meet at Windsor Castle for a season of prayer, and for inquiry into the causes of what they described to themselves as "that sad dispensation." One of the officers who took part, Adjutant Allen by name, wrote the story of that prayer-meeting with great earnestness of faith, and it is found among the Somers Tracts.

On the second morning of the meeting, as Allen tells us, "many spake from the Word and prayed; and the then Lieutenant-General Cromwell did press very earnestly on all there present to a thorough consideration of our actions as an army, and of our ways particularly as private Christians; to see if any iniquity could be found in them, and what it was, that if possible we might find it out, and so remove the cause of such sad rebukes as were upon us (by reason of our iniquities as we judged) at that time. And the way more particularly the Lord led us to herein was this: To look back and consider what time it was when, with joint satisfaction, we could last say, to the best of our judgment, the presence of the Lord *was* amongst us, and rebukes and judgments were not as then upon us. Which time the Lord led us jointly to find out and agree in; and having done so to proceed, as we then judged it our duty, to search into all our public actions as an army afterwards; duly weighing (as the Lord helped us) each of them, with their grounds, rules and ends, as near as we could. . . . By which means we were, by a gracious hand of the Lord, led to find out the very steps (as we

were all then jointly convinced) by which we had departed from the Lord and provoked Him to depart from us. Which we found to be those cursed carnal conferences [which] our own conceited wisdom, our fears and want of faith, had prompted us, the year before, to entertain with the king and his party. . . . Presently we were led and helped to a clear agreement amongst ourselves, not any dissenting, that it was the duty of our day, with the forces we had, to go out and fight against those potent enemies [namely, Scotch, Irish and English allies of King Charles] which that year, in all places, appeared against us. . . . And we were also enabled then, after serious seeking His face, to come to a very clear and joint resolution," — which was to the effect that, after dealing with the royalist rebellions of that year, it would be their duty "to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood," to an account.

Now, the attitude of mind which this discloses is unquestionably one that would greatly intensify a man's convictions when formed, by ascribing them practically to sources of divine inspiration; but it would do so by putting its own reasoning

Weakness of his Political Judgment.

faculties very much out of use. A religious believer of Cromwell's Puritan school could not at the same time be a political thinker, in the deeper sense; could not interpret events by inherent meanings to be found in themselves; could not bring to bear on them those fundamental principles of political judgment that are drawn from historical experience. That Cromwell was no political thinker is very plain; and it seems to be equally plain that his political instincts were exceedingly weak. Neither in reasoning faculties nor in intuitions nor in knowledge was he well equipped for dealing with the tremendous political problems which a revolution to the very bottom of things in England had cast upon him. He did not try to deal with them by any handling of his own; he simply trusted them to the Lord. Since Moses, at least, there is no other example in history of a man so strong who gave himself so unreservedly to be a willing instrument in God's hands for the carrying out of God's designs.

The old notion of Cromwell, that he was an eagerly, cunningly, overpoweringly ambitious man, who planned and forced the combinations of circumstance which gave him

opportunities to climb to a dictatorship, was totally wrong. Everything indicates that he had really a small share of the personal ambition to be looked for in one who could feel such masterful forces in himself. I doubt if anybody can read with care and candor his remarkable second speech to the first elected parliament of his Protectorate, in which he reviewed his own career, without recognizing that it is an honest, truthful outpouring from the heart. He was rehearsing the story of past events, in his own relation to them, to show that he had not raised himself, nor sought to raise himself, to the position of authority in which he stood. "After Worcester Fight," he said, "I came up to London to pay my service and duty to the parliament which then sat, hoping that all minds would have been disposed to answer what seemed to be the mind of God, namely, to give peace and rest to His people. . . . I hoped to have had leave to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again; and God be judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter." Then he proceeded to relate the dispersion of the Rump and other occur-

He was not Self-Seeking in Ambition.

rences, down to the calling of the assembly of "God-fearing men," sometimes styled the "Little Parliament," and of this he said: "As a principal end in calling that assembly was the settlement of the nation, so a chief end to myself was to lay down the power which was in my hands. I say to you again, in the presence of that God who hath blessed and been with me, in all my adversities and successes — that was, as to myself, my greatest end. A desire perhaps, I am afraid, sinful enough, to be quit of the power God had most clearly by His providence put into my hands, before He called me to lay it down."

Coming then to the framing of the Instrument of Government and the institution of the Protectorate, he gave this account of that procedure: "The gentlemen that undertook to frame this government did consult divers days together (men of known integrity and ability), how to frame somewhat that might give us settlement. They did consult; and that I was not privy to their councils they know it. When they had finished their model in some measure, or made a good preparation of it, they became communicative. They told me that except I would undertake the govern-

ment they thought things would hardly come to a composure or settlement, but blood and confusion would break in upon us. I refused it again and again; not complimentingly,— as they know, and as God knows. I confess, after many arguments, they urging on me that I did not hereby receive anything which put me into a higher capacity than before, but that it *limited* me, — that it bound my hands to act nothing without the consent of a council, until the parliament, and then limited by the parliament, as the act of government expresseth, — I did consent."

He ends the review by saying: "This is a narrative that discovers to you the series of providences and transactions leading me into the condition wherein I now stand. . . . I brought not myself into this condition: surely in my own apprehension I did not! And whether I did not, the things being true which I have told you, I submit to your judgment. And there I shall leave it. Let God do what he pleaseth."

Now this, to me, is a perfectly true representation of the facts of Cromwell's rise to positions where power came to him, was thrust upon him, and was accepted by him, simply

because he was the one man strong enough to exercise it, — strong enough to take the awful burden of a revolution upon himself. He brought not himself into the conditions in which he stood. He accepted them as from God, — as burdens of duty, divinely imposed. Essentially, I would call him a modest man, in the true sense of the term. He knew his own strength and shrank from no test of it; but I cannot discover a trace of egotism in anything that he said or did. I believe that he did actually take the very simple view of himself that he expressed in one of his later speeches, on the question of converting the Protectorate into kingship. "So far as I can," he then said, "I am ready to serve, not as a king, but as a constable. For truly I have, as before God, often thought that I could not tell what my business was, nor what I was in the place I stood in, save comparing myself to a good constable, set to keep the peace of the parish."

Power came to Him because of his Strength.

There could not be a more simply yet subtly true description of Cromwell's function as Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was the "good constable" of the three nations, fearless, faithful, vigilant, ready

in resource, powerful in action, and he kept the peace of his three great parishes as no other could have done. But not much that touches statesmanship is expected from the constable. He deals with things as he finds them under his hand; and so Cromwell did. The constable acts mostly upon orders from some higher mind; and Cromwell sought always for orders from the great Judge of all the earth, whose "providences" he watched unceasingly for signs and tokens of the divine will, and to whom he went continually in prayer.

His Failures in Statesmanship.

When death surprised him in the midst of his constableship, it is evident that he had received no enlightenment, from the source to which he looked for it, as to what should be done with his power. He was to name his successor, and none had been named. It was surmised or assumed that, in his last moments, he had indicated Richard Cromwell, his eldest living son; but there appears to have been no certainty of the fact. If a fact, then the dying Protector can have exercised no reasonable judgment in the choice. He knew the incapacity of this son. He refers to him often in his letters with fond rebuke and reproach for

the idleness, the love of pleasure, the extravagance, which were evident characteristics of the young man. While Henry Cromwell, the younger son, was an able and important actor in public life during his father's rule, — even lord-deputy and lord-lieutenant in Ireland for four years, — Richard Cromwell took no part in the great affairs of the time. Yet the Protector either made no provision for the succession to himself, or else named the frivolous idler, Richard Cromwell, to be a figure-head in the vacant seat, till the nation should thrust him out and bring the Stuarts back to a restored throne. In any career but Cromwell's there could be no explanation of so empty a conclusion. In his case we can feel sure that he had waited for divine leadings as to the final disposition to be made of the trust in his hands, and they did not come to him. I do not know that it was in the power of any statesmanship to avert the results that followed Cromwell's death; but, if there was, I think it plain that Cromwell was not the man to discover them.

Was he, then, a great man? I say yes. Great in personal force; great in the perfect fitting and powerful use of practical means to

practical ends; and great above all in the grandest moral qualities that can exalt a man: in sincerity; in earnestness; in faithfulness; in uprightness and downrightness of spirit; in fearlessness to do and fortitude to endure. Intellectually, I do not see him to have been a remarkable man, in any degree; and those powers that we call intellectual are large factors, necessarily, in our estimate of men. And so Cromwell realizes my conception of greatness incompletely, and I would not rank him among the greatest of men.

Intellectually Incomplete in his Greatness.

IV

WASHINGTON: IMPRESSIVE IN GREATNESS

IV

WASHINGTON: IMPRESSIVE IN GREATNESS

I TAKE it to be the settled judgment of the world that Washington was an eminent soldier and an eminent statesman, but not of the superlative order in either class; and, yet, that his place in history is with the supremely great men of all time. This implies values not shown on the surface of his life. What are they? The purpose of my present study is to bring them to light.

Great character is a growth, an evolution, a self-completion, and we need not look for more of it in the youth of Washington than the courage, the resolution, the self-reliance that are necessary bases of all personal strength. Those fundamentals are plain enough in the young Virginian who surveyed the Shenandoah Valley for Lord Fairfax in his seventeenth year; who bore the warning of Virginia five years later to French intruders in the Alleghany wilderness, and then led against them the little force which opened the final, decisive contest of Great

Early Years.

Britain with France for supremacy in the New World. They are plainer still, perhaps, in the Washington of Braddock's staff, and of the subsequent campaigns in which he commanded the Virginia troops. Nevertheless, those gallant and adventurous services might, in many a spirited young man, have preluded a quite commonplace career; and no greater career seemed opening to Washington in the next seventeen uneventful, happy years of his life. We can find, however, some tokens of the making of the future "Father of his Country" in the simple journals and letters which give us his own record of those years.

The Virginia Planter, 1769–1775.

By inheritance from his elder brother, as well as from his father, he possessed a great estate, and his marriage had brought to him the large wealth of his wife. Other estates, large and small, were in his keeping, as guardian or trustee. He was full of labors and business cares, and we can see that he was exercising in them that vigilance of eye and mind, that study and forethought, that faithful patience, that well-doing of all things, that went afterwards into the conduct of the War of American Independence. But the more significant indication of

the man at this period of his prime is in the political feeling that he shows, — the care for public interests and rights. Why should this country gentleman of large wealth, busy farmer of his own broad acres, exercising a luxurious hospitality, and living in all ways as an English gentleman of like fortune would live, — why should he concern himself much with questions between the colonies and the British parliament and King George? What harm to him could the Stamp Act do, compared with any serious political disturbance of his prosperous and happy life? Why should he not have been a contented, indifferent Tory, like so many of his comfortable class? Why? Because it was not in the nature of the man to be indifferent to questions of right and wrong, whether they touched himself little or much.

Nobody in Virginia had been reared and had lived under more of English influences than he; yet nobody was quicker than he to resent the English encroachments on colonial rights that began to thicken in the early years of the third George's reign. Nobody had more enjoyment of the luxuries of living which came in those days to the colonies from Eng-

land; yet none were more ready than he to forego them, as a means of making Englishmen understand the importance of a friendly harmony between their colonies and themselves. He gave early warning to his English friends of the non-importation agreements that were planned. Writing to a London relative of his wife, in September, 1765, he bade him remember "that our whole substance does already, in a manner, flow into Great Britain, and that whatsoever contributes to lessen our importations must be hurtful to their manufactures. And," he continues, "the eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive that many luxuries which we lavish our substance in Great Britain for can be dispensed with, whilst the necessaries of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves."

Non-importation did its work for the time being and won the repeal of the Stamp Act; but the right of parliament to lay taxes on the unrepresented subjects of the king in America was asserted and exercised still; and it is doubtful if the temper of even Sam Adams was hardened much more than that of Washington by the provocative measures of the next three years. He took the lead then,

as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, in measures to organize a more systematic and universal abstention from the use of British goods, and he was already prepared, moreover, for resistance in a sterner way. We find him writing bitterly to George Mason, on the 5th of April, 1769: "At a time when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke and maintain the liberty which we have derived from our ancestors. . . . That no man should scruple or hesitate a moment to use arms in defense of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet arms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier ressort.* Addresses to the throne and remonstrances to parliament we have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy of. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed by starving their trade and manufactures remains to be seen."

The renewed experiment of "boycotting" British goods, as we should describe it in

our day, was especially Washington's; for he drafted the Virginia resolutions, which had so great an effect in all the colonies that British exports in 1769 were cut down to a small fraction of what they had been the year before. Again the patriotic abstinence of the colonists wrung concessions, not to them, but to wailing merchants and manufacturers in British towns. Again there was a repeal of obnoxious acts, and again the sting of wrong in the acts was left to fester in the wound they had made, by an obstinate persistence in the taxing of tea. More than tempests in teapots came out of this brew, as we know, breaking at last into the storm of war, which Washington had expected and was ready to face.

The heavy hand of royal vengeance laid on Boston, for its rude action in the matter of the tea, moved him to that speech in the Virginia House of Burgesses which John Adams described as the most eloquent that was made: "I will raise a thousand men," he said, "enlist them at my own expense, and march, myself at their head, for the relief of Boston." Writing a few days later to his friend Bryan Fairfax, he explained the feeling which urged

him to so positive a course: "An innate spirit of freedom first told me," he said, "that the measures which administration hath for some time been and are now most violently pursuing are repugnant to every principle of natural justice; whilst much abler heads than my own hath fully convinced me that it is not only repugnant to natural right, but subversive of the laws and constitution of Great Britain itself." He dreads the struggle that he sees opening. "I could wish," he says, "that the dispute had been left to posterity to determine; but the crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights, or submit to every imposition that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves as the blacks we rule over."

It was in this spirit that he went, the next week, to the meeting at Philadelphia of the first Continental Congress, and, though he took little part publicly in its proceedings, the impression that he made may be gathered from a remark that is attributed to Patrick Henry, who was one of his colleagues in the Virginia delegation: "Mr. Henry," says Wirt, his first biographer, "on his return from the Continental Congress, being asked,

'Who is the greatest man in the Congress?' replied, 'If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor.'"[1] Having that weight in the Congress, we may be sure that his counsels are represented in the quietly resolute but pacific action that it took; for he would not hasten what he knew must come. But when he went to the second Congress, in the following spring, he wore his uniform as a colonel of the Virginia militia, to signify that he came as a soldier, ready for the task of the sword. Nearly a month before the Lexington and Concord fighting occurred, he had written to his brother, John Augustine: "It is my full intention to devote my life and fortune in the cause we are engaged in, if needful."

When the second Congress came together, it had no longer an open question to deal with, between war and peace. It accepted the state of war in New England, made the cause of Massachusetts

Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

[1] Wirt, p. 132. (See, also, note in *Life, Correspondence and Speeches of Patrick Henry*, vol. i, p. 247.)

the cause of all, adopted the forces in arms as a "continental army," and named officers to the command. In later years, when most of the better men of the Congress had been drawn away to other public duties, there was no act of unwisdom that this body could not commit; it might even have gratified the ambitious vanity of John Hancock and made him commander-in-chief; but in those early days the counsels of good sense could prevail, and Congress gave obedience to the plain reasons, of personal fitness and public policy, which pointed to Washington as the preferable man for the place.

That he was, indeed, the one man for it of all living men, and, we might say, of all conceivable men, was more than could be known in that day, as we know it now. Looking backward, we can see that the fate of the undertaking of rebellious war hung absolutely upon his acceptance of the offered command. How modestly, and with what a generous giving of himself to the country he took the great burden of duty, we all remember: "Lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorably to my reputation," he said to the Congress, "I beg it may be re-

membered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with. As to pay, I beg leave to assure the Congress that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit on it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire."

What he distrusted in himself was the technical preparation which nothing but a larger military experience could have given, and which all Americans lacked. He stated it a year later, in a letter written to recommend one of the Continental generals for an important command. "His wants," he said, "are common to us all, — the want of experience to move upon a large scale; for the limited and contracted knowledge which any of us have in military matters stands in very little stead, and is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, some knowledge of men and books, especially when accompanied by an enterprising genius."

That Washington, in taking the responsible leadership in the colonial revolt, was making the greatest of all sacrifices to the cause of American freedom was seen and understood at the time. John Adams wrote to Elbridge Gerry: "There is something charming to me in the conduct of Washington. A gentleman of one of the first fortunes upon the continent, leaving his delicious retirement, his family and friends, sacrificing his ease and hazarding all in the cause of his country." We must remember that it was not a mere temporary sacrifice of ease and "delicious retirement," and the society of family and friends, and the happy activities and hospitalities of Mount Vernon, that Washington was making. He was putting his whole future, his whole fortune, and even his life, at stake on the chances of the war. His risk in rebellion was greater than any other, when he made himself its chief; and not many in the undertaking could offer so much to its risks. In the first months of his task there were disheartened moments when he repented of what he had done, not because of its cost or its risk to himself, but because of the seeming hopelessness of success; yet never but once can we

find the least sign of a disposition to draw back from the work.

The discouragements that Washington encountered were not at all of the kind that he must have been prepared to overcome. He knew, of course, that he had an army to create, out of the rawest material and with the crudest and scantiest of means. He cannot have been disappointed on finding that the forces beleaguering Boston were a motley gathering of untrained men, accoutred in all sorts of fashions, sheltered in all sorts of makeshift ways, enlisted by different local committees, with great uncertainty as to the sources of their food and their pay. But he went to his command with an ardor of patriotism in himself which made him expectant of something similar in all who professed an attachment to the patriot cause. He looked for that especially in New England, where the cause had seemed to have its firmest support. He had idealized New England patriotism, it would seem; for General Greene, of Rhode Island, with whom he formed one of the first and warmest of his army friendships, wrote at this time to a friend: "His excellency has been taught to believe the people here a su-

The Trying Task at Cambridge.

perior race." So it sickened him to discover that many of the common people of the region of his first campaign were, actually, if Greene has described them correctly, "exceedingly avaricious," eager to make profit from the army, by taking all possible advantage of its needs. He was troubled, too, and saddened by many jealousies and quarrels among his officers over questions of rank. To one, a general officer of promise who thought of resigning because he had not been commissioned to his satisfaction, Washington wrote a noble letter of expostulation and reproach, and it had its effect: "In the usual contests of empire and ambition," he said, "the conscience of a soldier has so little share that he may very properly insist upon his claims of rank, and extend his pretensions even to punctilio; but in such a cause as this, when the object is neither glory nor extent of territory, but a defense of all that is dear and valuable in private and public life, surely every post ought to be deemed honorable in which a man can serve his country."

Another grievous disappointment that he suffered was on finding how quickly the mass of those who had taken up arms grew tired

of their undertaking and eager to escape. He had looked for more steadfastness like his own in the engagement of service to a great cause, and counted upon reënlistments from his temporary army, of enough durability to make training and discipline a fairly possible work. He learned his error as soon as the various short terms of his companies and regiments began to expire; and he was bowed almost to despair, even then, in the first months of his long task, by the wearing weight of a trouble that never lightened from the beginning to the end of the war. For the first and last time, so far as his correspondence reveals him, his strong spirit gave way to an outspoken regret that he had taken the burden of the struggle upon himself. Writing confidentially to his friend, Joseph Reed, lately his military secretary, on the 28th of November, 1775, he unburdened his sore heart in these words: "Such a dearth of public spirit and want of virtue . . . I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. . . . Could I have foreseen what I have and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command." But he seems after this to have

nerved himself to the endurance of anything and everything that might come in the way of the duty to which he was pledged. Once in the next year, after he had been driven from New York and was striving to hold together enough of forces to keep control of the river above the city, he exclaimed, in a private letter to his brother: "It is not in the power of words to describe the task I have. Fifty thousand pounds should not induce me again to undergo what I have done." But this expression of a weary self-pity only measures the invincibility of the higher motives which braced him with fortitude to undergo his trials to the end.

Always, it was the moral harassments of his work — the impediments and discouragements that arose from a shallowness in the public spirit on which it depended for support — that were most painfully trying to his great soul. The natural and necessary difficulties of a war conducted with inadequate means he could meet with cheerful readiness and overcome. How great they were in that first campaign, which expelled the British from Boston, and how successfully they were dealt with, we can learn from a letter which he wrote to Con-

gress on the 4th of January, 1776. "It is not," he said, "in the pages of history, perhaps, to furnish a case like ours. To maintain a post within musket-shot of the enemy for six months together without powder, and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another, within that distance of twenty odd British regiments, is more, probably, than ever was attempted." This was what Washington had done. Five weeks later he reported: "There are near two thousand men now in camp without firelocks"; and yet by the end of another month he had accomplished the expulsion of the British from Boston, by the seizure of Dorchester Heights. They sailed for Halifax, to prepare for fresh endeavors, and Washington made haste to New York, with most of his forces, to secure possession of the Hudson River, which he recognized as the one vital condition of success in the war. The Americans were sure to be driven from the sea, and New England would then be separated hopelessly from the other States if control of the Hudson valley should be lost. This was now the dominant consideration in his mind. The guarding of the Hudson became his prime task, and he took it personally upon himself.

I do not mean to touch the story of the campaigns of the next six years, in that field between the Hudson and the Delaware from which no allurements of opportunity for glory could draw Washington away. My wish is to open some glimpses of the under-history of those years; some disclosure of what they were in the experience of the commander-in-chief, to see what trials of the spirit he had, and how they were endured. That he was driven from Long Island and from the city of New York was inevitable, when Howe came back from Halifax with thirty thousand veteran troops, and Washington's force, including bodies of the rawest militia, was scarcely two thirds as much. After the battle of Long Island he wrote to Congress: "The militia . . . are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers of them have gone off, in some instances almost by whole regiments." He goes on to say that their want of discipline has infected the remaining soldiery, and he feels obliged to confess, "with the deepest concern," his "want of confidence in the generality of the troops." His distrust was justified on the retreat from New York, when two

Bitter Experiences of 1776-77.

of his brigades ran away in panic from about fifty of the enemy, leaving him to escape capture by following their flight. It was a few days after this that he wrote in deep despondency to Lund Washington, his relative: "Such is my situation that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave I should put him in my stead. I see the impossibility of serving with reputation, or doing any essential service to the cause by continuing in command; and yet I am told that if I quit the command inevitable ruin will follow, from the distractions that will ensue. In confidence I tell you that I never was in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born."

Washington had now come fully into the beginnings of his long and bitter experience of the impossibility of creating, or maintaining, or operating an efficient army under the conditions of government which the revolting Americans had formed. Their central assembly of representatives, known as the Continental Congress, had made the fatal mistake of not assuming the authority and the powers that were necessary to the performance of the duties it had assumed. It had taken the

responsibilities of the war upon itself, had adopted the army, had commissioned its officers, was giving them its orders and was subjecting them to its laws. If it had a right to do these things, it had logically and equally the right to control enlistments for the army and to raise the necessary means for its support. Its right to assume any governing authority, as an assembly representative of the people of the thirteen revolting colonies, was the indisputable but indefinable right of revolution, which belongs always to all peoples, when they find need to exercise it. The Continental Congress shared that right with the revolutionary legislatures formed in the several States; but its own claims to authority were clearly precedent to theirs. It had led the action which transformed them from dependent colonies into independent States; and it had put its stamp on their new character, while nationalizing their union, by its authoritative Declaration of Independence. It held a primacy in the revolutionary government, as the plainest of facts, and had all the reasons that make right for taking to itself, as of course, the full authority and power to act for the United States, from the beginning, in matters of com-

mon concern. That it did not do so was because too many of the leading patriots of the revolution were provincial in their political ideas, fearing to trust authority anywhere beyond their own local reach. Hence the Congress of the union, while taking the responsibilities of the war upon itself, left most of the power to fulfill them to be claimed and possessed by the several States.

The conditions which this produced were such that nobody except Washington seems conceivable as a leader of the army to success in the war. Month by month there was less of unity in anything except the trust and the hope which he inspired. Month by month Congress lost even influence to persuade the States to furnish quotas of troops and quotas of money to the military chest. Month by month the driblets of men and means from the States came more tardily, more meagrely, and less in worth. Who but Washington could have wrung from them even the little that came? For he was driven continually to make personal appeals to the States directly, because Congress had failed. And, then, how little that he received accorded with his want and his request! From the beginning of his experience at Cambridge

he pleaded for enlistments long enough in term to give him an army that could be disciplined and trained. He spent hours in writing arguments to show the wastefulness as well as the futility of an attempt to carry on war with a makeshift army of temporary soldiers, serving for a few months, or for a single year, and eked out, in all emergencies, by raw local militia, summoned hastily to camp. His labor was vain. Neither Congress nor the States would offer inducements that could bring more than some small number of men into the Continental ranks "for the war," or for any adequate period of time. From beginning to end of the war they kept him at least half dependent, at the best of times, on militia and raw recruits.

After the withdrawal from New York came the loss of the forts on the lower Hudson, and the retreat of Washington, with a dissolving army, through New Jersey to the Delaware and beyond it, still keeping, however, a guard in the highlands of the valley to hold those upper passes of the river. And now ignorant criticism and jealous intrigue began to work together against the unhappy commander-in-chief. For a time there were formidable incli-

nations in high quarters to put the treacherous adventurer, Charles Lee, in Washington's place; and Lee, to promote the scheme, held back his command from the junction with Washington that he had been ordered to make. Fortunately, while the intrigue was in progress, Lee fell into the hands of the enemy, and they kept him out of mischief for the next year and a half. Meantime, the few regiments with Washington were coming to the end of their short periods of enlistment and were dropping away. On the 19th of November, 1776, he wrote to his brother: "In ten days from this date there will not be above two thousand men, if that number, of the fixed, established regiments on this side of Hudson River, to oppose Howe's whole army, and very little more on the other, to secure the eastern colonies and the important passes leading through the highlands to Albany and the country about the lakes. In short, it is impossible for me, in the compass of a letter, to give you any idea of our situation, of my difficulties, and the constant perplexities and mortifications I meet with, derived from the unhappy policy of short enlistments and delaying them too long. I am wearied

almost to death with the retrograde motion of things."

Even recourse to the militia had failed him; for New Jersey seemed to have given itself up to the British since they entered that State. In a letter to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, on the 12th of December, he wrote: "The inhabitants of this State, either from fear or disaffection, almost to a man, refused to turn out. I could not bring together above a thousand men, and even on those very little dependence could be put." Nevertheless, within a fortnight from that writing, on Christmas Eve, in a storm of sleet, he made his famous return across the Delaware, with only twenty-four hundred men, surprised the Hessians at Trenton, and began the movements which recovered, in position, nearly all that he had lost in the previous two months. The achievement was a revelation of Washington's rare ability, and it had splendid effects, for a time. It encouraged France to give important secret aid to the States, in money and stores; and, temporarily, it inspirited the cause at home. Congress gave Washington extraordinary powers for six months, to raise new battalions, to displace and appoint all officers under the

rank of brigadier-general, etc.; but the result appears to have been much the same as on a later occasion, when such powers were put into his hands, and when he was constrained to write: "Congress has added to my embarrassments, . . . inasmuch as it gives me powers without the means of execution." The truth was, that Congress had few real powers to confer; it had thrown them away; and its action was little more than an attempt to escape from its own responsibilities.

For the time being, however, there was encouragement in the prospects of the commander-in-chief, and in February (1777) he wrote to his brother: "If we can once get the new army complete, and the Congress will take care to have it properly supplied, I think we may hereafter bid defiance to Great Britain and her foreign auxiliaries." But the hopefulness that leaned on those "ifs" was downfallen very soon. Early in March he is confessing confidentially to Governor Trumbull that a few days more will find him with almost nothing but militia to depend upon, for whatever hostilities the spring may set in motion. In April he is writing to the president of Congress: "If the men that are raised, few as

they are, could be got into the field, it would be a matter of some consolation; [but] every method that I have been able to devise has proved ineffectual." On the 1st of June he states to Richard Henry Lee, then in Congress, that recruiting "seems to be at an end."

But the small new army that Washington did succeed in assembling that summer had more durability of constitution than any that had come under his hands before, and he was able to fashion it somewhat nearly into the character he desired. Some of it had to be spared for the northern field, to meet Burgoyne's invasion from Canada; but that invasion roused a spirit in New York and in the neighboring New England States which gave splendid usefulness to their militia in the northern campaign. General Schuyler had organized the resistance to Burgoyne with ability; Stark, Arnold, and Morgan fought him to a stand and a surrender; but General Gates, whom Congress sent to supersede Schuyler, took the laurels of the great victory, and aspired now to the chief command.

Washington, meantime, was contending ably and valiantly, but unsuccessfully, in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, with Howe, who had

double his force. He had fought losing battles at the Brandywine and at Germantown; the British had entered Philadelphia; the prestige of the great leader seemed declining again. New intrigues for his displacement, and this time by Gates, were set on foot. The mean story of "the Conway Cabal" is too familiar for repetition; I mention it only as one of the trials and the provings that revealed the lofty character of Washington to the world. The simple manliness of the way in which he drew the conspiracy out of darkness and secrecy into open day was all that could be needed, then or since, to condemn it to the limbo in history of despised things.

The Winter at Valley Forge.

In quality the army was better than it had ever been before; but its numbers were insignificant, compared with what it had to do, and the poverty of its equipment is almost past belief. Washington began pleading in September for blankets and shoes, want of which latter, especially, had hindered the movement of troops; but December found the suffering Army of Independence not only more shoeless and blanketless than it had been three months before, but at the verge of being starved. We, all of us,

have some notion in our minds of its pitiable condition in that dreadful winter of 1777–78, which it lived through in huts that it built for itself at Valley Forge; Washington's report to Congress of the state of things existing on the 23d of December has been quoted very often and is familiar to most of us; but this review of the trials which proved the greatness of the man would be very incomplete if it did not recall some passages from that report:—

"I am now convinced beyond a doubt," he wrote, "that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes [place] in that [the commissary] line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. . . . Yesterday afternoon, receiving information that the enemy in force had left the city [Philadelphia] and were advancing toward Derby with the apparent design to forage, and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when, behold, to my great mortification, I was not only informed but convinced

that the men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended. This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp; and with him this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour. All I could do under these circumstances was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the soldiery. But will this answer? No sir; three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction." He proceeds to considerations which, he says, "justify my saying that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people is past all belief. The misfortune, however, does in my opinion proceed from both causes; and though I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that

department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted, yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare that no man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army. Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general, and to the want of assistance from this department the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. . . . Few men [have] more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. In addition . . . (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account) we have, by a field-return this day made, no less than 2898 men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and otherwise naked. . . . Since the 4th inst. our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers having been obliged, and

still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way) have decreased near 2000 men. . . . It adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress to find that much more is expected of me than is possible to be performed, and that upon the ground of safety and policy I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny."

This was written late in December. At the end of two months more the state of things does not seem to have improved; for General Greene, writing to General Knox, on the 26th of February, had this story to tell: "Our troops are getting naked, and they were seven days without bread. . . . The seventh day they came before their superior officers and told their sufferings in as respectful terms as if they had been humble petitioners for special favors; they added that it would be impossible to continue in camp any longer without support. Happily, relief arrived from the little collections I had made [in a foraging expedition] and some others, and prevented the army from disbanding. We are still in danger of starving; the commissary department is in

a most wretched condition, the quartermaster's in worse. Hundreds and hundreds of our horses have actually starved to death."

The little army which went through this bitter experience and bore it so admirably was made up of the few men whom Washington had been able to secure for a lengthened term of service; who had entered it with some notion of being real soldiers, and who were being effectively disciplined and trained. What could he have done in like circumstances with his forces of the previous year? And still there were sources of deep disaffection in the army to give anxiety and labor to the commander-in-chief. Its officers were receiving wretched pittances of pay, in paper money that was losing its purchasing power. For those who had families, and no private means, it became more and more impossible to stay in the service, and resignations came thick and fast.

Worthlessness in the Congress.

Washington's urgency for measures to put this and other military matters on a better footing, especially in the commissary and quartermaster departments, induced Congress, in January (1778), to send a committee to his headquarters for conference with him. The conference was

long; the whole subject of army administration, particularly with reference to food and clothing and the retention of experienced officers, was gone over, and the recommendations and suggestions of the commander-in-chief were embodied in an elaborate paper, with which the committee returned. There seemed to be a promise of prompt endeavors, at least, to remedy the worst evils of the military system. But weeks ran to months and the months to the end of the year, and nothing effectual was done, — except that General Greene, the ablest of Washington's division commanders, was persuaded to quit the field service which he preferred and take the duties of quartermaster-general. In doing this he was generously and patriotically sacrificing his ambitions; for, as he wrote afterward to Washington, "nobody ever heard of a quartermaster in history, as such"; but "I engaged in the business," he said, "as well out of compassion to your excellency as from a regard to the public. I thought your task too great, to be commander-in-chief and quartermaster at the same time." Greene made the best of the wretched conditions of his work; but after a year of hard service he tried to re-

sign, disgusted with the supineness of Congress and the needless difficulties that were left or put in his way. He was persuaded, however, to stay in the thankless office through half of another year.

Undoubtedly Greene's work brought considerable relief to Washington and the army; but there is no sign of anything done by Congress that materially bettered the conditions that were needlessly bad. In April the anxious commander is still reporting resignations of officers at the general rate of two or three a day, and writing: "I do not to this hour know whether . . . the old or new establishment is to take place; [and] how to dispose of the officers in consequence." At the end of May he is driven to write to Gouverneur Morris, one of the army committee of Congress, and one of its helplessly good members, pleading "that something, I do not care what," he says, "may be fixed and the regulations completed. It is a lamentable prospect," he continues, "that we are again to be plunged into a moving state [quitting camp, that is, for the field] (after six months of repose) before the intended regulations are made, and the officers informed who are and who not to be con-

tinued in service under the new establishment."

A few days more bring the ill-treated army to that "moving state," from Valley Forge, to follow the British in their withdrawal from Philadelphia to New York; and Washington, striking them at Monmouth Court House, snatches victory from the defeat which Lee, his treacherous second in command, attempted to bring about. "America," said Alexander Hamilton, writing of that achievement to a friend, "owes a great deal to General Washington for this day's work. A general rout, dismay and disgrace would have attended the whole army in any other hands but his. By his own good sense and fortitude he turned the fate of the day. . . . By his own presence he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops, and led them to success." It was one of the few opportunities that Washington had for proving brilliantly how great a soldier he was.

And yet the army with which he could do this is still distracted by its long-neglected discontents. Nine days after the Monmouth battle he is writing that "Congress can form no adequate idea of the discontents prevailing

on account of the unsettled state of rank, and the uncertainty in which officers are as to their future situation"; and a month later he is addressing that useless body again, with "reluctance," "to renew," he says, "my importunities on the subject of the committee of arrangement. The present unsettled state of the army is productive of so much dissatisfaction, and of such a variety of disputes, that almost the whole of my time is now employed in finding temporary and inadequate expedients to quiet the minds of officers and keep business on a tolerable sort of footing." And so it goes on, through the year and through the winter beyond it, into another campaigning season; and nothing but the strenuous, unremitting exertion of his great personal influence keeps enough of officers and men in camp or field to maintain a show of war.

Hitherto, in all his sore trials from the impotence of Congress, he has never swerved from his careful attitude of respect for and deference to the civil authority supposed to be lodged in its hands; but now he finds that attitude very hard to maintain. In a letter to the speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates (December 18, 1778) he ventures to express

what he thinks is a public belief, "that the States at this time are badly represented, and that the great and important concerns of the nation are horribly conducted, for want either of abilities or application in the members, or through the discord and party views of some individuals." A few days after writing this he is called to Philadelphia, for a conference with Congress, and writes from there (December 30, 1778) to the same correspondent: —

"I have seen nothing since I came here (on the 22d inst.) to change my opinion of men or measures, but abundant reason to be convinced that our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous and deplorable condition than they have been in since the commencement of the war. By a faithful laborer, then, in the cause; — by a man who is daily injuring his private estate without even the smallest earthly advantage not common to all, in case of a favorable issue to the dispute; — by one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly, and sees, or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin, you are beseeched most earnestly, my dear Colonel Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your country by . . . sending your ablest and best men to Congress.

. . . If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen and heard and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches seem to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of men; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day, whilst the momentous concerns of an empire, — a great and accumulated debt, — ruined finances, — depreciated money and want of credit . . . are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day and from week to week. . . . I again repeat to you that this is not an exaggerated account; that it is an alarming one I do not deny, and confess to you that I feel more real distress on account of the present appearances of things than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute."

Lafayette, who had gone to France (now in open alliance with the States) to solicit naval and military aid, found that the notorious factitiousness and incapacity of Congress

was ruining the American cause abroad, as well as at home. "For God's sake," he wrote to Washington (June 12, 1779) "prevent their loudly disputing together; nothing hurts so much the interest and reputation of America as to hear of their intestine quarrels"; and that good French friend addressed a remonstrance on the subject to Congress itself.

By this time (in 1779) all the old sufferings of the army from the systemless mismanagement and neglect of everything, in its commissariat and otherwise, that depended upon civil agents and authorities, were being more than doubled by the state of the "continental currency," which had sunk to the verge of worthlessness. "The depreciation of it is got to so alarming a point," wrote Washington to John Jay, in April, "that a wagon-load of money will scarcely purchase a wagon-load of provisions." His officers, more and more unable to support themselves, are dropping away from him continually. In December there is starvation in his army again. He makes a desperate appeal personally to the nearest States, telling them that his forces have been "five or six weeks on half allowance," and he writes to Congress that part of the army has been

several days without bread. A month later there is no improvement; for we find him turning to the county magistrates of New Jersey, with a call for grain and cattle, which he makes known that he must take by impressment if they are not furnished without. Finally, the climax of congressional impotence is reached, in February, 1780, when it throws up its useless hands, abandons even the pretense of attempting to supply the wants of the army, resolving that it will make requisitions upon the States and so cast the duty and responsibility on them. As Madison wrote to Jefferson, the position of Congress had thus "undergone a total change from what it originally was." Now, he said, "they can neither enlist, pay nor feed a single soldier, nor execute any other purpose, but as the means are first put into their hands."

The working of the new plan was soon described to Congress by Washington, who wrote in April: "The system of State supplies . . . has proved in its operation pernicious beyond description. . . . Some States, from their internal ability and local advantages, furnish their troops pretty amply, not merely with clothing, but with many little comforts and

conveniencies; others supply them with some necessaries, but on a more contracted scale; while others have it in their power to do little or nothing at all. The officers and men in the routine of duty mix daily and compare circumstances. . . . Those who fare worse than others of course are dissatisfied. . . . They become disgusted with a service which makes such injurious distinction. . . . The officers resign, and we have scarcely a sufficient number left to take care even of the fragments of corps that remain. The men have not this resource. They murmur, brood over their discontents and have lately shown a disposition to enter into seditious combinations."

On receipt of this letter Congress appointed a committee of three to confer with Washington, giving the committee extensive powers. This action was hotly opposed, on grounds that were reported by the French minister at Philadelphia to his government as follows: "It was said that this would be putting too much power in a few hands, and especially in those of the commander-in-chief; that his influence was already too great; that even his virtues afforded motives for alarm; that the enthusiasm of the army, joined to the kind of

dictatorship already confided to him, put Congress and the United States at his mercy; that it was not expedient to expose a man of the highest virtues to such temptations."

But even the apportioning and addressing of requisitions to the States proved too much for the energy of the assembly which embodied all existing authority for the government of the United States of America. Most of the men of the small army which had nobly borne the hardships of the past two years were near the dates of their discharge, and Congress could reach agreement on nothing that it would do toward getting their places filled by the States. In the past November, Washington had reported that the terms of over 8000 would expire in the course of the next five months; and urged prompt requisitions on the States. In December, when nothing had been done, he renewed his urgency, reminding Congress that "several of the [State] assemblies are now sitting, and if the requisitions of Congress do not reach them before they rise the delay on assembling them will protract our succors to a period which may leave us absolutely at the discretion of the enemy." "If not a moment should be lost,"

he pleads, "the recruits will hardly join the army before the month of April. . . . My anxiety on the subject is extreme." Nevertheless, it was not till the 9th of February (1780) that Congress passed an act making the desired requisitions. The British had then transferred their principal forces and important operations to the South, and beginning what proved to be an absolute subjugation of Georgia and South Carolina for many months. Practically there was nothing but the Southern militia and the companies of Marion, Sumter, and other partisan leaders, to resist them throughout the year. "We are now beginning," wrote Washington at the end of March to Philip Schuyler, "to experience the fatal consequences of the policy which delayed calling upon the States for their quotas of men. . . . What to do for the southern States, without involving consequences equally alarming in this quarter, I know not."

Why prolong the dismal record? It grows darker and darker to the verge of the end. The army shrinks steadily; when the French troops of Rochambeau arrive, the American commander-in-chief does not dare to pledge himself to definite plans for a coöperative cam-

paign, because he cannot foresee what forces he will have. The new men of the army are starved as their predecessors were, and will not endure it as patiently; hence formidable mutinies, which nothing but the impressive influence of Washington and the firm attitude of the strong officers who are his faithful support prevent spreading to a ruinous revolt. That is the main tenor of the remaining history, till French help and British blundering gave Washington his opportunity to trap Cornwallis at Yorktown, and substantially end the war. Then came the dangerous issue between a parsimonious, fatuous Congress and an unpaid, long-abused army, which threatened the wrecking of the national cause, even after it had been won. Who but Washington could have mediated with success between the two, and brought about a peaceful dissolution of the forces in arms? His patriotic service as a soldier was thus perfected to the last point of perfection that one's mind can conceive.

At this point let us pause and put together the impressions we have taken from these glimpses of the experience of Washington as commander-in-chief of the armies of the American Revolution. For my part, I am left

with such a sense of massiveness in character, — of massive and superlative strength in almost every moral element of character, — as comes to me from hardly another personage in history. It is not *force* in the dynamic sense, as we found it exhibited in Cromwell and Napoleon, and as we can find it in most of the great soldiers of the past, but *strength*, in its static meaning, — an immutable upholding strength, which nothing can break down. It is not in a single quality, or in any group of qualities, but in everything that could be tributary to greatness of spirit and moral solidity in a man. The disinterestedness of his patriotism; the unfaltering steadfastness of his devotion to the duty that he undertook; the equal faithfulness of his loyalty as a soldier to the merest shadows of civil authority and law; his high magnanimity and generosity of soul; his constancy; his fortitude; his courage; his self-mastery of powerful passions; his dutiful patience; his self-respecting dignity, — they are all big in the scale, beyond the largest common measure, when we weigh them together and attempt some conception of the singular grandeur of the character that they formed.

The Upholding Moral Greatness of Washington.

I do not know another that is quite so impressive in its kind. I do not know another that stands in quite the same relation to a great national cause. For nothing can be plainer than the fact that Washington won the independence of the American States, not so much by what he *did* as by what he *was*. Thereby he became, in a certain degree and a certain way, a substitute for some of the centralizing and inspiriting influences which the country had no organization of real government to generate or exert. Its trust was in him. He was the focus and his example was the inspiration of most of the public spirit that was kept alive to the end. Who but he could have retained or obtained any army after the first years, without sweeping aside the incapable Congress which abused its patience and crippled its work? Who else in his place would have paid the long-suffering deference and respect to that effigy of government which he rendered, with republican fidelity, for eight years?

If Washington had been as weak in political principle as Cromwell, who can doubt that there would have been "purgings" at Philadelphia, and a military dictatorship, and

very likely a crowned head for the new American nation? The thought of such a treason to the young republic was abhorrent to the true-hearted Virginian, aristocrat as he may seem to have been. He repelled the suggestion with angry rebuke when it came to him from some of his officers in the last year of the war. "I am much at a loss," he wrote, "to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my country." Later, in the midst of the political distractions which followed peace, talk of a monarchy reached Washington in his retirement, and he wrote with anxiety to Jay: "I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! . . . Would to God that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend." Yet, if a throne was erected, who but Washington could be thought of for king? Of course, he knew it to be so; but the knowledge bore no slightest temptation to his mind.

I am not sure that the greatest service of Washington to his country was not that which he rendered as the first and most trusted of its citizens, when the work of the soldier was finished, and the fruits of the independence he had won were in rapid and total decay, because of the want of any frame of substantial nationality, — any government to command respect, — to fulfill obligations, — to harmonize and promote public interests, — to preserve public order and peace. In that dreadful interval of five years, between the peace with Great Britain and the adoption of the Federal Constitution, when local jealousies, petty reckonings of self-interest and a foolish dread of all centralized power in government were combining to wreck the American experiment of a federated republic, the most powerful of all reasonable influences in the country was that of the known opinions of Washington. In private correspondence and in the few public addresses that he found occasion to make, he lost no opportunity to plead for a constitution "that will," as he described his conception of it, "give consistency, stability, and dignity to the Union, and sufficient powers to the great coun-

His Final Service.

cil of the nation for general purposes." It was the subject of most urgency in a circular letter which he addressed to the governors of all the States, in June, 1783, when preparing to disband the army; it was in his farewell orders to the armies, in the following November; and we find it in every letter that he wrote to men of weight in different parts of the country during the next five years.

Meantime he was leading the undertaking of Virginia to open trade routes between the tributaries of the Ohio and the Potomac and the James, as a means of binding the western country to the east, out of which sprang larger movements of commercial coöperation, resulting finally in the call of the immortal convention which framed the Federal Constitution of the United States. The fact that Washington would accept a seat in that convention was the decisive fact which secured the appointment of delegates from every State except Rhode Island; it was Washington's presidency of the convention that overcame its disagreements and averted failure in its work; and it is not possible to believe that the people would have given their consent to the much distrusted experiment of government under

the proposed constitution if they had not expected Washington to preside in the trial of it and inaugurate the exercise of its executive powers. It was the trust in him — in his wisdom, in his fidelity to the whole people, in the purity of his patriotism, and in the single-minded honesty of every motive in his nature — that had potency above all other influences in rescuing the country from that slough of faction and folly into which the old nerveless Confederation had allowed it to sink. Then, by the dignity, the firmness, the discreetness, and the soundness of principle in his administration, especially in the great measures which Hamilton conceived and Washington sustained, he established the new Union on bases of enough solidity to resist the shocks of party warfare which put it quickly to the test.

Incomparably "the Father of his Country."

Washington's value to the country in these periods of his public life was as measureless as in the period of his military command, and it was derived from the same combination of moral and intellectual qualities which gave him a unique greatness of upholding strength. When we call him the Father of his Country we are using what is hardly a figure of speech. His

relations to its birth and its youth were paternal in very fact. He truly gave it a national existence; he was looked to while he lived, as a child looks to its parent, for guardianship, guiding wisdom, protecting care. In all history I find nothing that parallels the preëminence of his standing in the life of a great nation, and nothing in greatness of character that is quite like his.

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LINCOLN: SIMPLEST IN GREATNESS

V

LINCOLN: SIMPLEST IN GREATNESS

In what may be called the accidents of their lives and the non-essentials of their personality, Washington and Lincoln, the two supremely great men in American history, are strikingly and strangely contrasted. So far as there have been patrician and plebeian distinctions in our society, Washington, born to the comfortable circumstances and considerable refinements of planter life in colonial Virginia, is representative of one class, while Lincoln, child of pioneering poverty in the first settlements of the early West, will stand for the other. But there was no heredity of caste in Lincoln's apparent plebeianism. The old notion that he sprang from the social substratum of chronically "poor whites" at the South has been proved to be wholly false. His family stock was as good in origin and as thriving generally as any; but something of ill-fortune and something of ill-thrift appear to have combined in making his father a poorer man than others of the name and kin.

Thomas Lincoln, the father, was one of the never prosperous migrants of his time, who pushed his family farther and farther to the roughest edges of civilization; from Kentucky to Indiana and from Indiana to Illinois. Hence the son, Abraham, had his breeding in circumstances as rude, as rigorous, as bare, as toilsome, but as wholesome in many respects, as have ever been found in American life. Of teaching in school he could sum up hardly more than a total of six months, when he referred to it in after years. It started him in reading, writing, ciphering, and that was enough. Absolutely it was enough; for a man more perfectly *educated* than Abraham Lincoln, in the true meaning of education, did not exist in the world, when the time came for his doing of great work. He had perfected his powers, and the simple story of the simple methods of self-culture and self-training by which he was natured to that perfect result holds the whole philosophy of education. It affords, too, a more distinct revelation of the mind that was to grow in the man from the mind of the boy than I know of in any other case of kindred intellectual gifts.

The Early Making of the Future Man.

The significance of the story is not in what it tells of difficulties and wants. That books of any kind came rarely within reach of Lincoln as a boy; that he borrowed far and near whatever he could obtain; that he made long extracts from his borrowed books, and so acquired something of a manuscript library; that he wrote on boards when paper was lacking, and re-copied later; that a freshly shaved wooden shovel and a charred stick were his substitutes for slate and pencil; that spicewood bushes and a cooper's shavings gave him light for his evening studies, — these are experiences of hardship such as many self-taught men have gone through. Lincoln's self-education was distinguished from that of most others by the remarkable exercising that went with the feeding of his mind, to produce assimilation in the most perfect degree. His intellectual nature was fastidious from the first and exacting in its demands. It would accept no indefiniteness in knowledge and no indistinctness of ideas. What he knew and what he thought must be absolutely clarified in his mind. If it did not come to him so from another mind, in talk or book, he must make it so, in language and thinking of his own. This

mental characteristic was manifested in the earliest childhood that his memory recalled in after life. He said once, in a conversation: "I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I do not think I ever got angry at anything else in my life; but that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. . . . I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down, trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea, until I had caught it; and when I thought I had got it I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over; until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north and bounded it south, and bounded it east and bounded it west."

Now, there we see Abraham Lincoln in the making, intellectually. There we see the fash-

ioning of the mind that dealt with the tremendous problems of the Civil War; that produced the great state papers of the great presidency; that won the faith and following of the nation through years of awful trial by its simple, persuasive wisdom. A mind luminous, absorbent, strong by nature, was clarified and strengthened to perfection by the cultivation of right habits of exercise with lifelong laborious care.

There is a moral revelation, too, of Lincoln, in this disclosure of his early processes of thought. It shows the truest kind of honesty that can exist in a man, — the fundamental rectitude of mind. That constitution of mind which *must*, by its own compulsion, work straightly and accurately and completely to the end of its thinking, always; which can suffer no dallying, or carelessness, or indifference, in its processes, or endure any dimness of light in its chambers; which is driven by a goad of nature to find the verity in whatever it seeks, and to be content with nothing else; — it is in that make of mind that all rectitude has its natural and only sure seat. Moral movements of feeling — leadings of conscience — may be potent in others, but never

with the unfailing certainty of uprightness found here.

Into a rare and wonderful alliance with this logical rectitude of thought came the humorous imagination which warmed and genialized Lincoln's mind. It lent the magic touch which transforms talent into genius. It doubled the sources of illumination to his thinking and speaking, by adding parable and allegory to argument, — suggestive illustration to rational deduction. It was a dramatic imagination, which actualized ideas, in parabolic anecdotes and stories, instead of imaging them in metaphors, as the poet does. It contributed some large part to a great gift of power for the just persuasion and right leading of men, such as few in all history have possessed. In this, too, as in the other part of that wonderful gift, the great man of history was foreshadowed in the roughly bred boy of the pioneer's cabin. The gift was never hidden in a napkin to rust. Boy and man, Lincoln was always eager to give out to others what he found in his own mind. From childhood he was the central talker, story-teller, speech-maker of his circle, and always its intellectual leader. One comrade of his boyhood, who is quoted by Miss

Tarbell in her biography, relates that "when he appeared in company the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk. . . . He argued much from analogy, and explained things hard for us to understand by stories, maxims, tales and figures. He would almost always point his lesson or idea by some story that was plain and near to us, that we might instantly see the force and bearing of what he said." The child, we see, was training all his powers for what the man would have to do.

In the feeding of such a mind as that of Lincoln, neither the number nor the kind of available books mattered greatly. The meats that came to it were so masticated and digested that whatever was real in substance sufficed. When, at eighteen, he found a volume of the Revised Statutes of Indiana, containing, furthermore, the Declaration of Independence, the Ordinance of 1787, and the Constitution of the United States, it gave him more than a library of standard literature would give to the ordinary studious boy. Its juiceless desiccations of law, history, political philosophy, social economy, were all dissolved in that digestive intellect of his, and went to

the making and nourishing of ideas that were fundamental in his future thinking and belief.

But the importance of books in Lincoln's education was not so supreme as it is commonly made. He craved them, and drew from them richly; but he craved still more the stimulus, the suggestion, the information, the expansion that he could get from talk with men. Perhaps he owed more of the perfect evolution and training of his peculiar powers to that wide intimacy of intercourse with his fellows which he sought continually, than he owed to books. Certainly it prepared him, as nothing else could have done, for the great work he was destined to do. He was to touch the minds and hearts of millions, win their faith and their love, guide them, lead them, by their reason and by their feeling alike, and he came to that mission prepared for it by a sympathetic acquaintance with men, apart and together, in their personal and their multitudinous character, such as few have ever had. The unconventional, democratic society of the Young West, in his young manhood and middle life, shuffled all sorts and conditions of people constantly into the public gatherings that he liked to join, — on the street — at the country post-

office and store—in and around the court-house—by the tavern fire in court-circuit times. He centred such knots of talkers and listeners around himself, as Socrates, in the old days of the Athenian free democracy, was wont to do. And how like Socrates he was, in his personal homeliness, in the self-forgotten carelessness of his manner and dress, and in the quality of his mind! Socrates had little humor for the tingeing of his genius, and Lincoln had much; but otherwise the ancient Greek and the modern American were men of singular likeness in kind. There was no atmosphere of philosophy in the Illinois of his day to turn Lincoln's thought to such ethical problems as Socrates delighted to discuss; but he dealt with questions of right and wrong that were practical and urgent in the politics of his time and country, as Socrates dealt with abstract conceptions of virtue; by probing processes, that is, which led to the same result. It is not likely that he ever read a translation of the dialogues of Plato; but he had quite the Socratic method of analytic argument, and exposed the fallacies of Douglas as Socrates, if his dialogue were turned into monologue, would have riddled the sophis-

tries of Gorgias and Protagoras. They had kindred minds and were kindred spirits; alike in intellectual honesty; alike intolerant of half-thinking; alike scornful of trickish and evasive minds; alike in all greatness of soul.

Opening of his Political Career.

For Lincoln's genius and character the truest field that could have opened was that in American politics, as he found it on reaching manhood, in the fourth decade of the last century, when imperious moral issues, raised by the aggressions of the slaveholding interest, were beginning to drive economic questions out of the public mind. The political field invited him so early, and he was so frankly ambitious to enter it, with such a consciousness of his ability for it, that when he had just reached the age of twenty-three he announced himself a candidate for the general assembly of Illinois. Offering himself as a Whig, in a district that was overwhelmingly Democratic, he experienced defeat, but obtained, at the same time, the first of many proofs that were to be given him of his singular attractiveness to the people who knew him best. In the little town of New Salem, where he had lived a single year, he received all but 23 of the votes cast, being 277 out of a total 300. Two years

later he repeated his candidacy, with success, and for eight years thereafter, from 1834 till 1842, he represented his district in the lower branch of the legislature of the State.

At about the same time he began the study of law. Hitherto his work had been mostly in occupations of manual labor, — in farming, rail-splitting, flat-boating to and from New Orleans, with some clerking in a country store. His first undertaking of what can be called skilled labor was in the office of deputy county surveyor, for which, on the unsought offer of it, he qualified himself by six weeks of intense study, night and day. This preceded his study of law by a few months, and his practice of surveying supported him till he had won admission to the bar and a living income from the law. He dropped it in 1837, when he removed from New Salem to the larger neighboring town of Springfield, which he, by his influence in the legislature, had been instrumental in making the capital of the State. From that time, law and politics were rival interests in his life, with the great public questions of the time always strongest in their appeal.

His mind was never stirred very deeply by party contentions over national banks, tariffs,

and internal improvements, on which he sided with Henry Clay; but a righteous indignation, which represented everything of bitterness that his reasonable nature could feel, was wakened quickly when the champions of slavery made claims and aggressions beyond its constitutional rights. He hated the institution, as his father and mother had hated it; but he respected the obligations of the national contract of Union too profoundly to lend countenance to any attack on slavery within its legalized domain. He repudiated the doctrines of the abolitionists in so far as they repudiated the binding law of the Constitution; but when the Illinois assembly, in 1837, adopted resolutions disapproving of those doctrines and condemning the formation of abolition societies, he was one of two members who protested against the resolutions, because they did not, at the same time, condemn slavery as an institution, and because they denied the constitutional power of Congress to abolish it in the District of Columbia.

This was his lifelong stand on all questions touching slavery that came up: unyielding resistance to every claim for it beyond the legal rights conceded to it clearly in the Con-

stitution; unfailing respect for those. As early as 1845 he defined for himself the future platform of the Republican party, in a letter which he wrote to one of the leaders of the "Liberty party" that was then taking form. "I hold it to be a paramount duty of us in the Free States," he wrote, "due to the Union of the States, and perhaps to liberty itself (paradox though it may seem) to let the slavery of the other States alone; while, on the other hand, I hold it to be equally clear that we should never knowingly lend ourselves, directly or indirectly, to prevent that slavery from dying a natural death, — to find new places for it to live in when it can no longer exist in the old."

For twelve years after quitting the Illinois legislature, in 1842, Lincoln went deeply into politics but once, when he served his district in Congress for a single term (1847–49). The time was that of the Mexican War, and Lincoln's skill in exposition was brought to use in illuminating the iniquitous claims and false pretenses that brought the war about. At the same time he gave his vote for supplying the means that were needful to the prosecution of the war. He branded the iniquity of the

government which had dragged the country into an unrighteous attack on a weaker neighbor, but he would not help to cripple the army which obeyed, as it must, that government's command. It was the morally patriotic course, which every conscientious American of our time who studies the circumstances of the Mexican War has to approve. In its day, however, it was an unpopular course in many parts of the country, and Lincoln may not have seen encouragement in his district to accept the Whig nomination for another term. There were, however, other reasons given for his retirement from Congress, after a service that was too brief for any lasting reputation to be made in it.

Roused by the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

On quitting Washington, in the spring of 1849, Lincoln believed that he was quitting political life, and he devoted himself to his profession for the next five years. Then came, in 1854, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820, opening to slavery the great region from which that act had barred it, and establishing what Senator Douglas, the author of the bill, called the principle of "popular sovereignty," to wit,

"that all questions pertaining to slavery in the Territories, and the new States to be formed therefrom, are to be left to the people residing therein." Everything in Lincoln's nature, reason and feeling, moral sense and political judgment alike, sprang to instant revolt against this breach of a compact which, during half the life of the nation, had been established among the bonds of its federal union. He could not keep himself out of the thickest of the political battle which opened then, or be anywhere in it save far forward in the front; for no other man entered it with such powers as his, so wrought to their utmost pitch.

It was then that the surpassing quality and measure of the man began to be revealed, even to the closest of his long-admiring friends, and possibly even to himself. It began to be seen that his speeches were something more than beyond the common, — that they were masterpieces of argumentative oratory. We have one of them well reported, from the first encounters that occurred between Lincoln and Douglas, on the new political issue, in 1854. It was delivered at Peoria, in October, in reply to a speech made by Douglas on the previous day. To me it seems the most perfect, the

most powerful, of Lincoln's speeches; partly, perhaps, for the reason that his first presentation of many views and his first expression of many thoughts which came, necessarily, again and again, into the discussions of the next years, are found in this address. I am bold enough to go further, and say that a more perfect political argument never came from an English-speaking tongue, if, indeed, from any other. The perfection of it is equally in the logic and the temper, the warmth and the candor, the searchingness and the simplicity, the large plan and the exquisite workmanship, the satisfying completeness of the whole and of every part. There are no surprising splendors, — no bursts of eloquence, — no crimson and purple patches in the speech, such as Burke or Webster might have thrilled us with; but the pure crystal of it wants no coloring, — needs nothing but the glow of the light that fills it full.

Sympathetic Feeling toward the South.

With all of Lincoln's fervid feeling at the time there is not the least acrimony in the speech; nothing of the acidity, for example, that runs, with little dashes of courteous sweetening now and then, through Webster's reply to Hayne. Toward

the South he felt kindly and sympathetic, as he never ceased to feel.

"I think," he said quietly, "I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses North and South. . . . When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we are, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists and that it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely shall not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia, to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me that whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be in this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. If they were all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days;

and there are not surplus shipping and surplus money enough to carry them there in many times ten days. What then? Free them all and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon. What next? Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this, and, if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of whites will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment is not the sole question, if, indeed, it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well- or ill-founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot, then, make them equals. It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted; but for their tardiness in this I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the South.

"When they remind us of their constitutional rights, I acknowledge them, not grudgingly, but fully and fairly; and I would give them any legislation for the reclaiming of their fugitives which should not, in its strin-

gency, be more likely to carry a free man into slavery than our ordinary criminal laws are to hang an innocent one.

"But all this, to my judgment, furnishes no more excuse for permitting slavery to go into our own free territory than it would for reviving the African slave trade by law."

Here, in these few words of frank statement, we can see that the judgment and the feeling which guided Lincoln's whole treatment of slavery, when he *had* power to deal with it, was determined, distinctly and fully in his mind, six years before the power came to him, and that the possession of the power made no slightest change.

By one more citation from this pregnant speech of 1854 I wish to show how long the basic line of his statesmanship as President had been prepared in his mind, before the responsibilities of the crisis of the conflict with slavery were laid upon him. "Nebraska is urged," he said, "as a great Union-saving measure. Well, I, too, go for saving the Union. Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any great evil to avoid a greater one. But when I go to

Union-saving I must believe, at least, that the means I employ have some adaptation to the end. To my mind Nebraska has no such adaptation. 'It hath no relish of salvation in it.' It is an aggravation, rather, of the only one thing which ever endangers the Union. . . . It could not but produce agitation. Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature, — opposition to it in his love of justice. These principles are in eternal antagonism, and when brought into collision, so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will speak."

The working of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, in the first application of it, to Kansas, was what Lincoln had predicted it would be. Six years of fiery agitation and conflict ensued, in the course of which Douglas was driven to uphold his doctrine of popular sovereignty by rebellion in his own

The Great Debate with Douglas.

party. The old political organizations were dissolved. Anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats came together and formed the Republican party. Lincoln, from the first, was the recognized leader of the new party in Illinois, and it came near to seating him at once in the Senate of the United States. In 1856, at the national Republican convention, he was proposed for Vice-President, on the ticket with Frémont, and received the second highest number of votes. In 1858, when Douglas came to Illinois for reëlection to the Senate, Lincoln was the candidate chosen to oppose him.

Douglas was now the conspicuous man in America; his fight for the retention of his seat in the Senate was the exciting event of the day, and the joint debates to which Lincoln challenged him had the nation for their audience. Reports of the speeches of the antagonists were published far and wide at the time, and subsequently in a volume, of which 30,000 copies were sold in a few months.

Douglas won his reëlection by aid from certain of the anti-slavery people, who thought it policy to send him back to the Senate for continued battle with the Buchanan administration; but Lincoln won the next presidency

of the United States. He won it designedly for his party, but unconsciously for himself. He had widened his reputation and risen immensely in public esteem, while Douglas came out of the encounter with serious wounds. One, especially, was fatal to the future career of the author of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Lincoln, by shrewd questioning, had forced him into a deadly dilemma, between offense to the North and offense to the South, compelling him to maintain that the inhabitants of a territory, in the exercise of their "popular sovereignty," might keep slavery from entering it by police regulations and "unfriendly legislation," in the teeth of the Dred Scott decision, which the Supreme Court had rendered a few months before, and that Congress had no constitutional power to interpose. This "Freeport doctrine," as it came to be called, pleased voters enough in Illinois to give Douglas his victory there, and Lincoln had foreseen that quite probable result when he planned to draw it out; but he met the expostulation of friends, who warned him that it meant defeat to himself, by saying: "Gentlemen, I am killing larger game; if Douglas answers, he can never be President; and the

battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." It came to pass as he foresaw. The Democratic party was broken into sectional factions by that "Freeport doctrine," which Lincoln's unselfish acuteness had drawn into dispute, and the triumph of the Republican party in 1860 was practically assured.

It is needless to dwell on the circumstances and incidents of the next two years, which were shaped, by God's mercy, to bring about the nomination and election of this now nationalized great man of the West, to be the President of what seemed to be the dissolving federation of American States. Let us come at once to the day when he took his heroic oath to "preserve, protect and defend" a broken Constitution, and was commissioned to restore authority and character to a government which treason had betrayed and feebleness had abased.

President of the United States.

It is not easy to realize the appalling complexities of peril and difficulty that he faced that day. Seven slaveholding States had then passed ordinances of secession from the Union, had withdrawn their representatives from Congress, had seized forts, arsenals, and other property of the Federal Government within

their limits, and had organized a new confederacy, based avowedly on slavery as its corner stone. In the other slaveholding States much division of opinion and feeling prevailed. The positive secessionists in those States were in a minority; but that minority was sure of instant reinforcement from a greater body of theoretic secessionists, if the right of secession should be denied to the States claiming it, and if measures of coercion were undertaken. It was sure, too, of further reinforcement from the nominal Unionists of those States, if slavery should be touched by the new administration in a hostile way.

In the free States there were much the same divisions of sentiment, but the proportions were reversed. Unquestionably, the positive, unconditional Unionists were a heavy majority from the first; the positive secessionists, who would willingly have taken part in the wrecking of the Union (like Fernando Wood, for example, and other plotters of a movement to make New York a "free city") were an insignificant number; but, in March, 1861, there was a really formidable body of theoretical secessionists in the North, who upheld the late President, Buchanan, in his

conclusion that the Federal Government had no power to restrain a State which saw fit to secede.

In the border slave States the conditional and unconditional Unionists, together, had strength enough to give hope that they might, if wisely aided, hold those States from secession, even in the event of a conflict with the rebellious States. As we look back now, that seems to have been the sole substantial ground there was for a hope of success in resisting the destruction of the Union. In other words, there appears now to have been hardly a possibility of success in the war for the Union if the rebellious confederacy had been joined by the border slave States. Quite as plainly, too, there appears to have been no possibility of restraining them from that junction if the least disposition to attack slavery had been shown by the new administration in its first year of power; and any effect from that cause which weakened Unionism in the border slave States would have strengthened the opposition to the government in the free States and crippled its arm.

Many who could recognize and understand these fundamental facts of the situation in

moments of thoughtful reflection were quick to forget them in the heat of a passionate desire for the destruction of slavery, as the cause of the war. It seemed to be Lincoln only whose wise, well-trained mind could hold them always in its thought, and never be seduced to forgetfulness of them. He could set the compass of his Union-saving policy in accord with them, and steer by it unswervingly, through all the cross-currents and against all the wayward winds of partisan passion and conscientious recklessness that shook the helm under his firm, strong hand. Who but Abraham Lincoln, among the public men of that time could have done this thing? Who but he could have stood up against the powerful men and bodies of men in his party who had more angry eagerness to strike at slavery than faithful determination to save the Union, — resisting them, baffling them, angering them, and yet planting deep down in their hearts, all the time, a profound faith in himself? Who else could have stood between Seward factions, Chase factions, Greeley factions, Cameron and anti-Cameron, Blair and anti-Blair factions, and been in friendly independence of them all?

And who but Lincoln, at the outset of his administration, could have brought himself and Seward, the most important of Republican leaders, into cordial and perfect coöperation, after the astounding suggestion which Mr. Seward, as secretary of state, had made to his chief, that he (the secretary) would take on himself the duties and responsibilities of the head of government, if the President should so desire? To this most offensive intimation that the President must feel himself unfit for the great office to which he had been raised, Mr. Lincoln replied with a simple dignity and an unruffled temper which no spirit but the loftiest could have shown. Mr. Seward, on his part, was high-minded enough to recognize his superior in the man whose measure he had mistaken, and two months later he wrote confidentially to his wife, "the President is the best of us." What had passed between the two men was never disclosed till it came to light upon the publication of the great biography and history of Lincoln by his private secretaries, Nicolay and Hay. Its disclosure then was just to Lincoln, for it is one of the most important of the revelations of greatness in his soul. That degree of magnanimity, pro-

duct of a devotion to impersonal ends that can extinguish every egoistic feeling, is one of the rarest virtues found in men, and Lincoln's capacity for it was never surpassed. It bore him through countless sore dealings with presumptuous, meddlesome, petty statesmen, party magnates, arrogant soldiers, who were slower than Mr. Seward to learn how masterful a strength and how profound a wisdom were veiled by the unpretending simplicity and homely manners of the country lawyer from Illinois.

The question of most urgency that waited for his decision when he came to the presidency was that of action in the case of Fort Sumter, and it was Lincoln's wise treatment of that problem which drew out of it the impassioned excitement of loyal feeling which solidified the North. Seward and one other, at least, of his cabinet advisers, supported by General Scott, then the head of the army, would have surrendered the fort, thus encouraging the rebellion, disheartening loyal people North and South, and discrediting the government at home and abroad. Blair, at least, in the Cabinet, and some naval advisers, would have precipitated a conflict with the

beleaguering batteries of the Confederates at Charleston, by undertaking to reinforce as well as provision the feeble garrison of the fort. Lincoln listened to all counselors, obtained all possible information, waited, watching and pondering, till the last possible hour before Major Anderson and his men must have food, and then sent a special messenger to Charleston, with instructions to read the following to the governor of the State: "I am directed by the President of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions, only; and that, if such attempt be not resisted, no effort to throw in men, arms or ammunition will be made without further notice, or in case of an attack on the fort." In this fair notification there was no challenge or provocation of hostilities; and when the Confederates responded to it by opening fire on the starved garrison of Sumter they left no question in any reasonable mind as to the placing of responsibility for the beginning of war. The secessionists had placed themselves too plainly in the wrong for their theoretic partisans in the free States to uphold them any longer; even Buchanan declared against them, while

the potent voice of Douglas (then ill, and not far from death) was raised to rally his great body of followers to the defense of the national flag. Whatever of hesitant or disloyal feeling there had been in the North was beaten down by a wild tempest of patriotic excitement, and the government, for a time, was supported by a practically solid North, with a tremendous invigoration of loyalty in the border States.

His Inspiring Influence.

The white heat of excitement which produced that emotional fusion could not, in human nature, be maintained. In any circumstances it would have cooled, and such circumstances as came very soon — in reverses to the national armies, and in the slow testing, the necessarily slow testing of inexperienced and untried general officers, to weed out the inefficient and find the men of capacity and power — were too chilling for any fervor of enthusiasm in a whole people to resist. Complaining criticism was provoked inevitably; and inevitably it bred divisions that weakened and factions that obstructed the government in its terrible task. The wonder is, not that discontent, disheartenment, division, obstructive faction grew up

in those dreadful years of civil war, but that more of every possible mischief to the national cause was not produced; that the courage of the loyal people was kept so high as it was, — its resolution so firm, — its unity of purpose and effort so nearly complete; and it was the influence of Abraham Lincoln, beyond all other influences combined, that kept it so. He brought about, between himself, as chief magistrate, and the whole people, a familiar and confidential relation such as had not been known or dreamed of in government before. Sometimes formally, in official documents and addresses, sometimes informally, in open letters to prominent personages or to committees and associations, he opened his mind to the public, on occasions of disturbing controversy or of depressing events, with a frankness, a simplicity, a warmth of feeling, a wisdom of judgment and a clearness and force of reasoning that were marvelous in the impression they made. The country found itself yielding to the authority of a master mind and the charm of a rare literary genius, long before it knew why.

Such words of tender feeling as those spoken by the great President at Gettysburg and in

his second inaugural address, which went to the hearts of the people, are remembered better than the wise words that he addressed to their understanding; but the immortal eloquence of the man is no more in one than in the other. Take an example of his persuasive reasoning from the first inaugural address, where thirteen sentences hold the whole argument of common sense against the rupturing of the Union: —

"One section of our country," he said, "believes slavery is right, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases after the separation than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one

section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

"Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. Husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you."

Like the power of this appeal to reason against the breaking of the Union was the power of the President's thrilling arraignment, a little later, of the assailants of Fort Sumter

for the wantonness of their guilt in precipitating civil war. In his message to Congress, convened in special session on the 4th of July after the opening of hostilities, he recited the circumstances of the event, and said of it: —

"It is thus seen that the assault upon and reduction of Fort Sumter was in no sense a matter of self-defense on the part of the assailants. They well knew that the garrison in the fort could by no possibility commit aggression upon them. They knew — they were expressly notified — that the giving of bread to the few brave and hungry men was all which would on that occasion be attempted, unless themselves, by resisting so much, should provoke more. They knew that this government desired to keep the garrison in the fort, not to assail them, but merely to maintain visible possession, and thus to preserve the Union from actual and immediate dissolution — trusting, as hereinbefore stated, to time, discussion and the ballot-box for final adjustment; and they assailed and reduced the fort for precisely the reverse object — to drive out the visible authority of the Federal Union, and thus force it to immediate dissolution. That this was their object the executive well under-

stood; and having said to them in the inaugural address, 'You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors,' he took pains not only to keep this declaration good, but also to keep the case so free from the power of ingenious sophistry that the world should not be able to misunderstand it. By the affair at Fort Sumter, with its surrounding circumstances, that point was reached. Then and thereby the assailants of the government began the conflict of arms, without a gun in sight or in expectancy to return their fire, save only the few in the fort, sent to that harbor years before for their own protection, and still ready to give that protection in whatever was lawful. In this act, discarding all else, they have forced upon the country the distinct issue, 'immediate dissolution' or blood."

In the same message the sophism of the secession doctrine, "that any State of the Union may, consistently with the National Constitution, and therefore lawfully and peacefully, withdraw from the Union without the consent of the Union or of any other State," is shattered in what seem to be the fewest words that ever carried an argument of such force: —

"This sophism," said the President, "derives much, perhaps the whole of its currency from the assumption that there is some omnipotent and sacred supremacy pertaining to a State — to each State of our Federal Union. Our States have neither more nor less power than that reserved to them in the Union by the Constitution — no one of them ever having been a State out of the Union. The original ones passed into the Union even before they cast off their British colonial dependence; and the new ones each came into the Union directly from a condition of dependence, excepting Texas. And even Texas, in its temporary independence, was never designated a State. The new ones only took the designation of States on coming into the Union, while that name was first adopted for the old ones in and by the Declaration of Independence. Therein the 'United Colonies' were declared to be 'free and independent States'; but even then the object plainly was not to declare their independence of one another or of the Union, but directly the contrary, as their mutual pledge and their mutual action, before, at the time and afterward, abundantly show. The express plighting of faith by each and all

of the original thirteen in the Articles of Confederation, two years later, that the Union shall be perpetual, is most conclusive. Having never been States either in substance or in name outside of the Union, whence this magical omnipotence of 'State Rights,' asserting a claim of power to lawfully destroy the Union itself? Much is said about the 'sovereignty' of the States; but the word even is not in the National Constitution, nor, as is believed, in any of the State constitutions. What is 'sovereignty' in the political sense of the term? Would it be far wrong to define it 'a political community without a political superior'? Tested by this, no one of our States except Texas ever was a sovereignty. And even Texas gave up the character on coming into the Union; by which act she acknowledged the Constitution of the United States, and the laws and treaties of the United States made in pursuance of the Constitution, to be for her the supreme law of the land. The States have their status in the Union, and they have no other legal status. If they break from this they can only do so against law and by revolution."

Two months later he had entered the long

torment of his trouble with a great body of shallow-minded good people, who could not see the futility, in existing circumstances, of a stroke at slavery, for any desired purpose, and the fatality of it to the cause of the Union. General Frémont, their fit representative, had issued, as commanding officer in the Department of the West, his presumptuous proclamation of emancipation, thinking to force that suicidal war policy on the government and make the President a helpless follower of his lead. Lincoln nullified the insolent edict unhesitatingly, but in such a manner as to exhibit the fine generosity of his temper anew. Then he faced the storm of objurgation that broke on him, — silently before the public for a twelvemonth, because the actualities of the situation in the wavering border States could not be discussed publicly without mischievous effects; but what he could say privately to the shame of his critics may be seen in the confidential letter that he wrote to Senator Browning, of his own State, which appears in his published writings.

His Labor for Compensated Emancipation.

Through all that following year he labored to persuade Congress to offer and the Union-

ists of the border States to accept compensation for the voluntary freeing of their slaves, as a means of ending hope in the rebellious Confederacy of being joined by those States. He began the effort in November, by drafting a proposed bill "for compensated abolishment in Delaware." In the following March he addressed a special message to Congress on the subject, earnestly recommending the adoption of a joint resolution to the following effect: "That the United States ought to coöperate with any State which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State, in its discretion, to compensate for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system." In support of the proposal he wrote:—

"The Federal Government would find its highest interest in such a measure, as one of the most efficient means of self-preservation. The leaders of the existing insurrection entertain the hope that this government will ultimately be forced to acknowledge the independence of some part of the disaffected region, and that all of the slave States north of such part will then say, 'The Union for which we

have struggled being already gone, we now choose to go with the Southern section.' To deprive them of this hope substantially ends the rebellion; and the initiation of emancipation completely deprives them of it, as to all the States initiating it. The point is not that all the States tolerating slavery would very soon, if at all, initiate emancipation, but that, while the offer is equally made to all, the more Northern shall, by such initiation, make it certain to the more Southern that in no event will the former ever join the latter in their proposed confederacy. I say 'initiation' because, in my judgment, gradual and not sudden emancipation is better for all. In the mere financial or pecuniary view, any member of Congress, with the census tables and treasury reports before him, can readily see for himself how very soon the current expenditures of this war would purchase, at fair valuation, all the slaves in any named State."

A few days after sending this message to Congress the President invited the Representatives from Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware to an interview at the White House, where he went more fully into the reasons for his proposal. He found that

they had been made to feel distrustful of it by the New York *Tribune* and other Republican organs, which understood it to mean that they "must accept gradual emancipation according to the plan suggested, or get something worse," and they "did not like to be coerced into emancipation." He strove earnestly to dispel this view of his intentions, and received at the end their assurance that, as they expressed themselves, "whatever might be our final action, we all thought him solely moved by a high patriotism and sincere devotion to the happiness and glory of his country; and with that conviction we should consider respectfully the important suggestion he had made."

Congress, by large majorities in both branches, adopted the proposed resolution, proffering pecuniary aid to any State which should undertake a compensated emancipation of slaves, and the President lost no opportunity to press the acceptance of it on the States which could be reached by his appeal. Having occasion, in May, to revoke another presumptuous declaration of general freedom to slaves, issued by Major-General David Hunter, commanding a department embracing the three

States of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, he did so by a proclamation in which he went beyond its immediate purpose to say this: —

"I further make known that, whether it be competent for me, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether, at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field. These are totally different questions from those of police regulations in armies and camps."

Then, citing the joint resolution which he had recommended to Congress in the preceding March and which that body had adopted, he added: —

"The resolution . . . now stands an authentic, definite and solemn proposal of the nation to the States and people most immediately interested in the subject-matter. To the people of those States I now earnestly appeal. I do not argue — I beseech you to make arguments for yourselves. You cannot, if you would, be

blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and enlarged consideration of them, ranging, if it may be, far above personal and partisan politics. This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the Pharisee. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time, as in the providence of God it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it."

On the 12th of July he sought another conference with the border States Representatives in Congress and renewed his appeal to them.

"Let the States which are in rebellion see definitely and certainly," he said, "that in no event will the States you represent ever join their proposed confederacy, and they cannot much longer maintain the contest. But you cannot divest them of their hope to ultimately have you with them so long as you show a determination to perpetuate the institution within your own States. Beat them at elections, as you have overwhelmingly done, and

nothing daunted, they still claim you as their own. You and I know what the lever of their power is. Break that lever before their faces, and they can shake you no more forever. . . . If the war continues long, as it must if the object be not sooner attained, the institution in your States will be extinguished by mere friction and abrasion — by the mere incidents of the war. It will be gone, and you will have nothing valuable in lieu of it. Much of its value is gone already. How much better for you and for your people to take the step which at once shortens the war and secures substantial compensation for that which is sure to be wholly lost in any other event! . . .

"I am pressed with a difficulty not yet mentioned — one which threatens division among those who, united, are none too strong. An instance of it is known to you. General Hunter is an honest man. He was, and I hope still is, my friend. I valued him none the less for his agreeing with me in the general wish that all men everywhere could be free. He proclaimed all men free within certain States, and I repudiated the proclamation. He expected more good and less harm from the measure than I could believe would follow.

Yet, in repudiating it, I gave dissatisfaction, if not offense, to many whose support the country cannot afford to lose. And this is not the end of it. The pressure in this direction is still upon me, and is still increasing. By conceding what I now ask you can relieve me, and, much more, can relieve the country, in this important point. Upon these considerations I have again begged your attention to the message of March last."

What he so pleaded for was not yielded, and the demand on him for a military edict of freedom which his profound sagacity could not yet approve, as being of probable effect for help to the national cause as much as for harm, grew heavier from day to day. Its principal mouthpiece was the New York *Tribune*, through which Horace Greeley harangued the President angrily, on the 19th of August, in what he assumed to entitle "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," and in which he went so far as to declare that "on the face of this wide earth there is not one disinterested, determined, intelligent champion of the Union cause who does not feel that all attempts to put down the rebellion and at the same time uphold its inciting cause are preposterous and

futile." This insulting intimation that he was not a "disinterested, determined, intelligent champion of the Union cause," and that he was attempting to uphold slavery, drew from the patient, steadfast, far-seeing pilot of the ship of state his famous "Letter to Horace Greeley," which said: —

"As to the policy I 'seem to be pursuing,' as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be to 'the Union as it was.' If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slav-

ery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

His profoundly controlling sense of the distinction that must always be guarded in his mind, between the promptings of his personal feeling and the dictates of his official duty, which he strove in this letter to make understood, was expressed more distinctly by Mr. Lincoln much later, in April, 1864, when remarks on the subject which he had made to Governor Bramlette of Kentucky, and others, were put in writing by him at their request. He said then: —

"I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remem-

ber when I did not so think and feel; and yet I have never understood that the presidency conferred on me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government — that nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be ampu-

tated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery, or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country and Constitution, all together. When, early in the war, General Frémont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then secretary of war, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March, May, and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the border States to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come

unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying a strong hand upon the colored element. I chose the latter."

The Military Proclamation of Emancipation.

This shows us how absolute in its sacredness to him were the obligations of the oath of his office, to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States; how absolutely it forbade him to do anything against slavery to any other end than of helpfulness to the performance of that paramount duty; and why, therefore, he pondered and debated so long the probabilities of effect from a proclamation of emancipation, as being favorable or unfavorable to the chances of success in the preservation of the Constitution by the preservation of the Union. He was balancing the solemn question in that faithfully reasoning mind of his when his letter to Horace Greeley was written; and he was so near to a determination upon it that his Preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation was issued exactly one month later. Even nine days before the publishing of the proclamation he argued against the mea-

sure with a committee from the religious denominations of Chicago, who came to plead with him for it: "What good would a proclamation of emancipation from me do, especially as we are now situated?" he asked. "I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative, like the Pope's bull against the comet. Would my word free the slaves, when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel States? Is there a single court, or magistrate, or individual that would be influenced by it there? And what reason is there to think it would have any greater effect upon the slaves than the late law of Congress, which I approved, and which offers protection and freedom to the slaves of rebel masters who come within our lines? Yet I cannot learn that that law has caused a single slave to come over to us. . . . Now, then, tell me, if you please, what possible result of good would follow the issuing of such a proclamation as you desire? Understand, I raise no objections against it on legal or constitutional grounds; for, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, in time of war I suppose I have a right to take any measure which may best subdue

the enemy; nor do I urge objections of a moral nature, in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre at the South. I view this matter as a practical war measure, to be decided on according to the advantages or disadvantages it may offer to the suppression of the rebellion. . . . Do not misunderstand me because I have mentioned these objections. They indicate the difficulties that have thus far prevented my action in some such way as you desire. I have not decided against a proclamation of liberty to the slaves, but hold the matter under advisement; and I can assure you that the subject is on my mind, by day and night, more than any other. Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do."

Nobody can doubt that the subject was on his mind by day and by night, with infinitely more pressure than on the minds of any who wished to determine it for him. Probably, in the few days that passed between his words to the Chicago committee and the publishing of the Proclamation of Emancipation (prepared tentatively some weeks before), he had arrived at no clearer certainty of judgment as to its effect, but only reached the conviction that he must risk the attempt with it.

Results proved that he had reason for his hesitations and doubts. Twenty months later, in his talk to Governor Bramlette and others, the most that he could claim for the proclamation as a war measure was, that "more than a year of trial now shows no loss by it in our foreign relations, none in our home popular sentiment, none in our white military force — no loss by it anyhow or anywhere"; and that "on the contrary it shows a gain of quite a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen and laborers" — from the emancipated slaves. If there was no loss of real strength in "our home popular sentiment" produced by the proclamation, there was certainly much embitterment of feeling and much excitement of activity in those Northern circles where more or less of the tie of old political alliances with the South and with slavery was still of force. "Copperheadism" reared its malignant head and showed its fangs, as it had not done before, and the party of the War Democrats became a more troublesome and embarrassing party of opposition than it had been hitherto. In the border slave States there was plainly a cooling of the loyal temper, though not to the point of any threatening reaction. The adverse

effects, in fact, were only serious enough to indicate how dangerous they would have been at an earlier stage of the war, before the nation had been resolutely settled to its painful task.

As for the easing or shortening of that task, by the great decree of death to slavery, there is no sign of that effect. None was visible in the two years and a half of war which followed it, and none is discernible to-day. The battle was fought out to its bitter end, of exhaustion to the weaker side. Possibly it had to be carried to that decisive ending; but if a more merciful conclusion was in any way possible it would surely have been reached by the way which Lincoln strove so hard to have taken. Voluntary acceptance of compensated emancipation by the border States would have disheartened the Confederates as nothing else could, by destroying all hope of the adhesion of those States to their Confederacy. What perfect conditions would thus have been prepared for a warning proclamation, like that of September 22, 1862, holding the same proffer of compensated emancipation open for a designated period to the States in rebellion, at the end of which time the whole power of

government would be directed to the compulsory liberation of all slaves! Can we doubt that this — so prepared for, as Lincoln wished to have it — would have raised demands in the Confederacy for acceptance of the proffer, and caused dissensions enough to weaken the rebellion greatly, if not to break it down?

Delayed as it was by Lincoln's wisdom, until the irresistible trend of events had brought a safe majority of the upholders of the Union as near to agreement in approval of it as they could be brought, the Proclamation of Emancipation was an immortally great and necessary measure; not as being importantly contributory to the defeat of secession, but as giving finality to the defeat. It certified to the country and the world that slavery should not survive the rebellion it had caused, and that the Union of States to be contended for thenceforth should be a Union in which all men were free. It lifted the Union side of the Civil War to a moral plane, above the purely legal ground on which it had to be begun, and it was Lincoln's wise management that brought the legal and the moral motive into consistent harmony, for the energizing of both.

And now, having satisfied the anti-slavery

demand, the President must turn to reason with those who were angered by the proclamation, denouncing it as an abolition measure, false to the purpose and fatal to the success of the War for the Union. The number taking that attitude was seriously large. He had also to deal with the malignant faction at the North whose opposition to the government ran now into seditious and treasonable courses; and, finally, he had to reason with a formidable body of political opponents who, while taking no part in such disloyal conspiracies, yet denounced every measure of the executive against them by any other than the slow ordinary processes of the civil law. How scorchingly, with a few quiet words, he could expose the unreasonableness of such denunciations we may see in a few passages from his letter to Erastus Corning and others, written on the 12th of June, 1863. Resolutions adopted at a public meeting in Albany had been sent to him by the officers of the meeting, and this letter was his reply. In part he wrote: —

His Reasoning with the Disaffected at the North.

"The resolutions promise to support me in every constitutional and lawful measure to suppress the rebellion; and I have not knowingly

employed, nor shall knowingly employ, any other. But the meeting, by their resolutions, assert and argue that certain military arrests, and proceedings following them, for which I am ultimately responsible, are unconstitutional. I think they are not. The resolutions quote from the Constitution the definition of treason, and also the limiting safeguards and guarantees therein provided for the citizen on trials for treason, and on his being held for capital or otherwise infamous crimes, and in criminal prosecutions his right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. They proceed to resolve 'that these safeguards of the rights of the citizen against the pretensions of arbitrary power were intended more especially for his protection in times of civil commotion.' And, apparently to demonstrate the proposition, the resolutions proceed: 'They were secured substantially to the English people after years of protracted civil war, and were adopted into our Constitution at the close of the Revolution.' Would not the demonstration have been better if it could have been truly said that these safeguards had been adopted and applied during the civil wars and during our revolution, instead of after the one and at the

close of the other? I, too, am devotedly for them after civil war, and before civil war, and at all times 'except when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require' their suspension. . . .

"I was slow to adopt the strong measures which by degrees I have been forced to regard as being within the exceptions of the Constitution, and as indispensable to the public safety. Nothing is better known to history than that courts of justice are utterly incompetent to such cases [of treasonable secret aid to a rebellion]. Civil courts are organized chiefly for trials of individuals, or, at most, a few individuals acting in concert — and this in quiet times, and on charges well defined in the law. . . . He who dissuades one man from volunteering, or induces one soldier to desert, weakens the Union cause as much as he who kills a Union soldier in battle. Yet this dissuasion or inducement may be so conducted as to be no defined crime of which any civil court would take cognizance. Ours is a case of rebellion — so called by the resolutions before me — in fact, a clear, flagrant and gigantic case of rebellion; and the provision of the Constitution that 'the privilege of the

writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended unless when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it,' is the provision which specially applies to our present case. This provision plainly attests the understanding of those who made the Constitution, that ordinary courts of justice are inadequate to 'cases of rebellion,' — attests their purpose that, in such cases, men may be held in custody whom the courts, acting on ordinary rules, would discharge. . . .

"Of how little value the constitutional provision I have quoted will be rendered if arrests shall never be made until defined crimes shall have been committed, may be illustrated by a few notable examples: John C. Breckenridge, General Robert E. Lee, General Joseph E. Johnston, General John B. Magruder, General William B. Preston, General Simon B. Buckner, and Commodore Franklin Buchanan, now occupying the very highest places in the rebel service, were all within the power of the government since the rebellion began, and were nearly as well known to be traitors then as now. Unquestionably if we had seized and held them, the insurgent cause would be much weaker. But no one of them had then com-

mitted any crime defined in the law. Every one of them, if arrested, would have been discharged on *habeas corpus* were the writ allowed to operate. In view of these and similar cases, I think the time not unlikely to come when I shall be blamed for having made too few arrests rather than too many. . . .

"I understand the meeting whose resolutions I am considering to be in favor of suppressing the rebellion by military force — by armies. Long experience has shown that armies cannot be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. The case requires, and the law and the Constitution sanction, this punishment. Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert? This is none the less injurious when effected by getting a father or brother or friend into a public meeting, and there working upon his feelings till he is persuaded to write the soldier boy that he is fighting in a bad cause, for a wicked administration of a contemptible government, too weak to arrest and punish him if he shall desert. I think that, in such a case, to silence the agitator and save the

boy is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy."

The exercise of martial law which, at this time, had specially excited the political opponents of the government, was that which dealt with Vallandigham, the most virulent and influential representative of Copperheadism in the North. He had been arrested in Ohio, on the 4th of May, for disloyal speeches, had been tried by a military commission, and, after a brief imprisonment, had been sent through the lines into rebeldom, to join his allies there. Whereupon a timely meeting of the Democratic State Convention in Ohio nominated him for Governor of Ohio, and adopted resolutions demanding freedom for him to return to his home. These resolutions were presented to the President, by a committee from the convention, soon after the publication of his letter to the Albany meeting, and the chairman of the committee, in some remarks, attempted a criticism of what was said in that letter. The President replied in writing, on the 29th of June, and disposed of the essential part of the criticism in these few incisive words: —

"You ask, in substance, whether I really claim that I may override all the guaranteed

rights of individuals, on the plea of conserving the public safety — when I may choose to say the public safety requires it. This question, divested of the phraseology calculated to represent me as struggling for an arbitrary personal prerogative, is either simply a question who shall decide, or an affirmation that nobody shall decide, what the public safety does require in cases of rebellion or invasion. The Constitution contemplates the question as likely to occur for decision, but it does not expressly declare who is to decide it. By necessary implication, when rebellion or invasion comes, the decision is to be made from time to time; and I think the man whom, for the time, the people have, under the Constitution, made the commander-in-chief of their army and navy, is the man who holds the power and bears the responsibility of making it. If he uses the power justly, the same people will probably justify him; if he abuses it, he is in their hands to be dealt with by all the modes they have reserved to themselves in the Constitution."

When he turned to the demands of the Ohio convention, for Mr. Vallandigham's liberation, he met it with a reply so perfect, so

pat, so pointed, and so straight to the point, — so humorous in its very logicality, that it shook the whole country with a laugh of admiration and delight: —

"The convention you represent," he wrote, "have nominated Mr. Vallandigham for Governor of Ohio, and both they and you have declared the purpose to sustain the National Union by all constitutional means. But of course they and you in common reserve to yourselves to decide what are constitutional means; and, unlike the Albany meeting, you omit to state or intimate that in your opinion an army is a constitutional means of saving the Union against a rebellion, or even to intimate that you are conscious of an existing rebellion being in progress with the avowed object of destroying that very Union. At the same time your nominee for Governor, in whose behalf you appeal, is known to you and to the world to declare against the use of an army to suppress the rebellion. Your own attitude, therefore, encourages desertion, resistance to the draft, and the like, because it teaches those who incline to desert and to escape the draft to believe it is your purpose to protect them, and to hope that you will become strong enough to do so.

"After a short personal intercourse with you, gentlemen of the committee, I cannot say I think you desire this effect to follow your attitude; but I assure you that both friends and enemies of the Union look upon it in this light. It is a substantial hope, and by consequence a real strength, to the enemy. If it is a false hope and one which you would willingly dispel, I will make the way exceedingly easy. I send you duplicates of this letter in order that you, or a majority of you, may, if you choose, indorse your names upon one of them and return it thus indorsed to me, with the understanding that those signing are thereby committed to the following propositions, and to nothing else: —

"1. That there is now a rebellion in the United States, the object and tendency of which is to destroy the National Union; and that, in your opinion, an army and navy are constitutional means for suppressing that rebellion;

"2. That no one of you will do anything which, in his own judgment, will tend to hinder the increase, or favor the decrease, or lessen the efficiency of the army or navy while engaged in the effort to suppress that rebellion; and

"3. That each of you will, in his sphere, do all he can to have the officers, soldiers and seamen of the army and navy, while engaged in the effort to suppress the rebellion, paid, fed, clad, and otherwise well provided for and supported.

"And with the further understanding that upon receiving the letter and names thus indorsed, I will cause them to be published, which publication shall be, within itself, a revocation of the order in relation to Mr. Vallandigham."

It is needless to say that the indorsement of these propositions never came to the President. At the ensuing election Vallandigham was buried under an avalanche of loyal votes.

Such incomparable expositions as these of the ruling mind in the government, — of its shrewd, all-seeing sagacity, its lucidity, its rectitude, its strength, its poise, its perfect temper, — these were the nation's tonic in that awfully trying time. Through and against all adversities they established in it the will and the faith which supported it to the end. More than its people knew, the uncompromising determination which never parleyed with rebellion, and accepted nothing less from the

long conflict than an enduring vindication and affirmation of the Federal Constitution of their republic, was drawn from the depths of their trust in a leader whom they found themselves learning to look upon as a gift from the providence of God. That trust was too profound, in the minds and the hearts of too weighty a mass of the loyal people, to be shaken by the intriguing factions which strove to put another in Lincoln's place. His reëlection in 1864 by a majority of more than half a million in the popular vote was the answer of the people to an opposing party which demanded peace by concession and compromise, "after four years of failure," as they declared in convention at Chicago, "to restore the Union by the experiment of war."

The Second Inaugural Address.

When, on the next 4th of March, he stood again at the front of the Capitol, to renew his solemn oath of fidelity to the Constitution, the awful conflict of four years was drawing near to its end, and an illimited triumph of the cause which he represented had come almost visibly within reach. It was then, on the approach to that triumph, filled with a solemn sense of its cost and of the new tasks of statesmanship it must

bring,—it was then that the surpassing nobility of spirit in the man was most impressively shown. Of his wonderful address on that day it was said by Carl Schurz: "No American president had ever spoken words like these to the American people. America never had a president who found such words in his heart." And when, indeed, had the chief of any nation ever found in his heart such words before. These seventeen marvelous sentences, into which the meanings of the war and of the issues from it, as he saw them, were told to his fellow countrymen, can never be put too often into print or too often read: —

"And the war came. One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party ex-

pected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which

the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, — fervently do we pray, — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

Since more than a year before these words were spoken the two States of Louisiana and Arkansas had been so fully controlled by the Union forces that the problem of a readjustment of their constitutional relations to the Federal Union had become an immediately pressing one, and had

The Wise President's Plan of Reconstruction.

been worked upon most profoundly and dispassionately, we may be sure, in the President's mind. With his annual message to Congress in December, 1863, he had issued a proclamation of amnesty, which opened doors for the return of both individuals and States to the Union fold. It excepted certain classes of leaders and special offenders from an offer of pardon, "with restoration of all rights of property except as to slaves," extended to all participants in the rebellion who would subscribe a given oath. This oath pledged fidelity to the Constitution and the Union, and support to what had been done by legislation and proclamation touching slavery, "so long and so far as not repealed, modified or held void" by Congress or the Supreme Court. The proclamation announced that whenever, in any State where rebellion had prevailed, a number of qualified voters, not less than one tenth of the number of votes cast at the presidential election in 1860, should take the prescribed oath and reëstablish a republican State government in conformity with it, such government would be recognized as the true government of the State; but admission to Congress of representatives and senators from such State

would be dependent on the Congress itself. This, said the President, "is intended to present . . . a mode in and by which the national authority and loyal State governments may be reëstablished" in the States designated; but "it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be acceptable."

The proclamation and its suggested plan of "reconstruction" for the States in rebellion gave general satisfaction in and out of Congress; a few radicals only, whose patriotism was more passionate than statesmanlike, objecting to its leniency, and claiming for Congress the sole power to deal with the seceded States. According to the radical view, the rebellion of those States had wrought a forfeiture of all their constitutional rights as States, reducing them to the status of subjugated provinces, or Territories, from which they ought not to be redeemed on terms so simple and mild as the President proposed. This radical view gained ground in Congress, and produced finally a bill, passed in the last hours of the session (July, 1864), which embodied a very different plan, requiring a majority of the white male citizens of a seceded State to take the prescribed oath before any reconstruc-

tion of State government could occur, and dictating a single mode in which the proceedings of reconstruction must be carried out. This would nullify action that had been taken already in Louisiana and Arkansas, and the President declined to sign the bill, which came to him an hour before Congress adjourned. He laid it before the country, in a published proclamation, which said: "While I am . . . unprepared, by a formal approval of this bill, to be inflexibly committed to any single plan of restoration, and while I am also unprepared to declare that the free State constitutions already adopted and installed in Arkansas and Louisiana shall be set aside and held for naught, thereby repelling and discouraging the loyal citizens who have set up the same as to further effort, . . . nevertheless I am fully satisfied with the system for restoration contained in the bill, as one very proper plan for the loyal people of any State choosing to adopt it." By this wise course President Lincoln avoided a mischievous issue between Congress and himself. His own policy and action, looking to the speediest possible healing of the wounds of civil war, were approved by public opinion, and when his radical op-

ponents, at the next session of Congress, attempted new legislation, to undo his measures, they could carry it through neither House.

The last public utterance of the President, three evenings before his assassination, when he responded to a serenade which celebrated the approaching end of the rebellion, had reference to this difference between his own conception of what would be wisdom in the use of recovered authority over the States lately at war with the national government and the more punitive course urged in opposition to it. Speaking of the plan proclaimed in December, 1863, he said: —

"I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any professed emancipationist came to my knowledge until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it. From about July, 1862, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested [in] seeking a reconstruction of a State government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned, reached New Orleans, General Banks wrote me that he was confident that the people,

with his military coöperation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan. I wrote to him and some of them to try it. They tried it, and the result is known. Such has been my only agency in getting up the Louisiana government.

"As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated. But as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest; but I have not yet been so convinced. I have been shown a letter on the subject, supposed to be an able one, in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixed on the question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would perhaps add astonishment to his regret to learn that, since I have found professed Union men endeavoring to make that a question, I have purposely forborne any public expression upon it. As appears to me, that question has not been, nor yet is, a practically material one, and that any discussion of it, while it thus remains practically immaterial, could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our

friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as the basis of a controversy, and good for nothing at all — a merely pernicious abstraction.

"We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States, is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union, and each forever innocently indulge his own opinion, whether in doing the acts he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

"The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all if it con-

tained 50,000, or 30,000, or even 20,000, instead of about 12,000, as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government as it stands is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relations to the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? . . .

"What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other States. And yet so great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State, and, withal, so new and unprecedented is the whole case, that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the

South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper."

That Abraham Lincoln did not live to make another announcement on this question, in which the more vital consequences of the great Civil War were wrapped up, is one of our national misfortunes. In the light of what has come from the bitterer spirit and the narrowed views which prevailed in the work of reconstruction after his influence was withdrawn we can measure the calamity of his death.

The Calamity of his Death.

We are nigh to half a century from the time when that great man of the West acted his great part on a tragic stage, and I think the world agrees that his figure looms grander and more heroic the farther we recede. The fact about him which time discloses more and more is this: that his greatness is measured, like that of Washington, not so much by what he was able to *do* for the cause of Union and freedom, as by what he was able to *be* to it. It was not his part to ride upon the storm which rolled out of the free North to overwhelm treason and slavery; it was not his part to forge its thunderbolts, nor to hurl them; it was his sublimer part to

The Measure of his Greatness.

stand like a firm, strong pillar in the midst of the swaying tempest of that uncertain time, for a tottering nation and a shaken cause to hold themselves fast by. That is what he was to us; that is what he did for us; and that is the kind of providence in human affairs which great characters, only, of the grandest mould and make, are given for. How much this people leaned upon him while they fought their weary battle out; how much they took strength from his strength, patience from his patience, faith from his faith, they never knew till he lay dead at their feet. To us who lived through it, what an appalling day was that, when, right in the moment of our consummated triumph, Lincoln was slain, and the pillar on which our very trust in one another had rested more than we understood was overthrown! For a time it seemed as though the solid earth had sunk away from our feet and chaos had come again. It took us hours to believe that all our victory had not come instantly to naught, and that all the long battle had not been fought in vain. It took us days to recover belief in the reunion and rehabilitation of the republic with Lincoln gone. All that he had been to us began to dawn upon our under-

standings then. We began then to know what an incarnation of democracy he had been; what a soul of sincerity and verity he had supplied to the cause of popular freedom; with what possession his great character had folded itself about every feeling that we had which made us patriotic, democratic, republican.

And, yet, from what simplicity of nature that influential strength of the man had come! Here, in truth, was the final secret of it. He had kept his nature as it was given him. He was so little a world-made man, — so very much a God-made man. The child had grown into the man, — not the man out of the child. That rare kind of growth must preserve the best fibre and elasticity of being. It must have helped to produce the quaint, homely humor which some people mistook strangely for clownishness and levity. Levity! Who ever looked into the sad eyes of Abraham Lincoln, when his great burden was heavy upon him, and believed there was levity in the soul of the man? His earnestness was of a strain too deep for those who slandered him that way to understand.

Some have said that it was fortunate for Lincoln's fame that he died when he did. No

doubt a certain consecration of his memory was produced by the cruelty and martyrdom of his death; but farther than that there seems no ground for the thought. If he had been left with us, to be our counselor and guide in the hard return from war to peace, we should surely have come by a shorter and a better way to better conclusions than we have reached.

But no matter; it is idle to speculate on that. The important thing to be thought of is, that we thank God as we ought to do for the gift of this man's greatness while it was ours, and that we do not let ourselves have lived vainly in the light of it. If we mean to be, in fact and truth, the democracy that we pretend to be and are not; if we genuinely wish to stand toward one another, as fellow citizens of a political commonwealth, in the simple relation of man to man, and give to one another and take from one another all that men can give and take in a perfected social state, he has intimated to us how, and signified the kind of republicans we must be. If this nation is to be truly great, it must be great as Lincoln was, by verity and simpleness, by honesty and earnestness; its politics a fair

weighing of true opinions; its diplomacy a straight acting toward just purposes and necessary ends; its public service a duty and an honor; its citizenship a precious inheritance or a priceless gift. Let us have faith enough and hope enough to believe that the time of these things is coming yet; and then, not till then, will the monument of Abraham Lincoln, exemplar of democracy and type of the republican man, be builded complete.

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